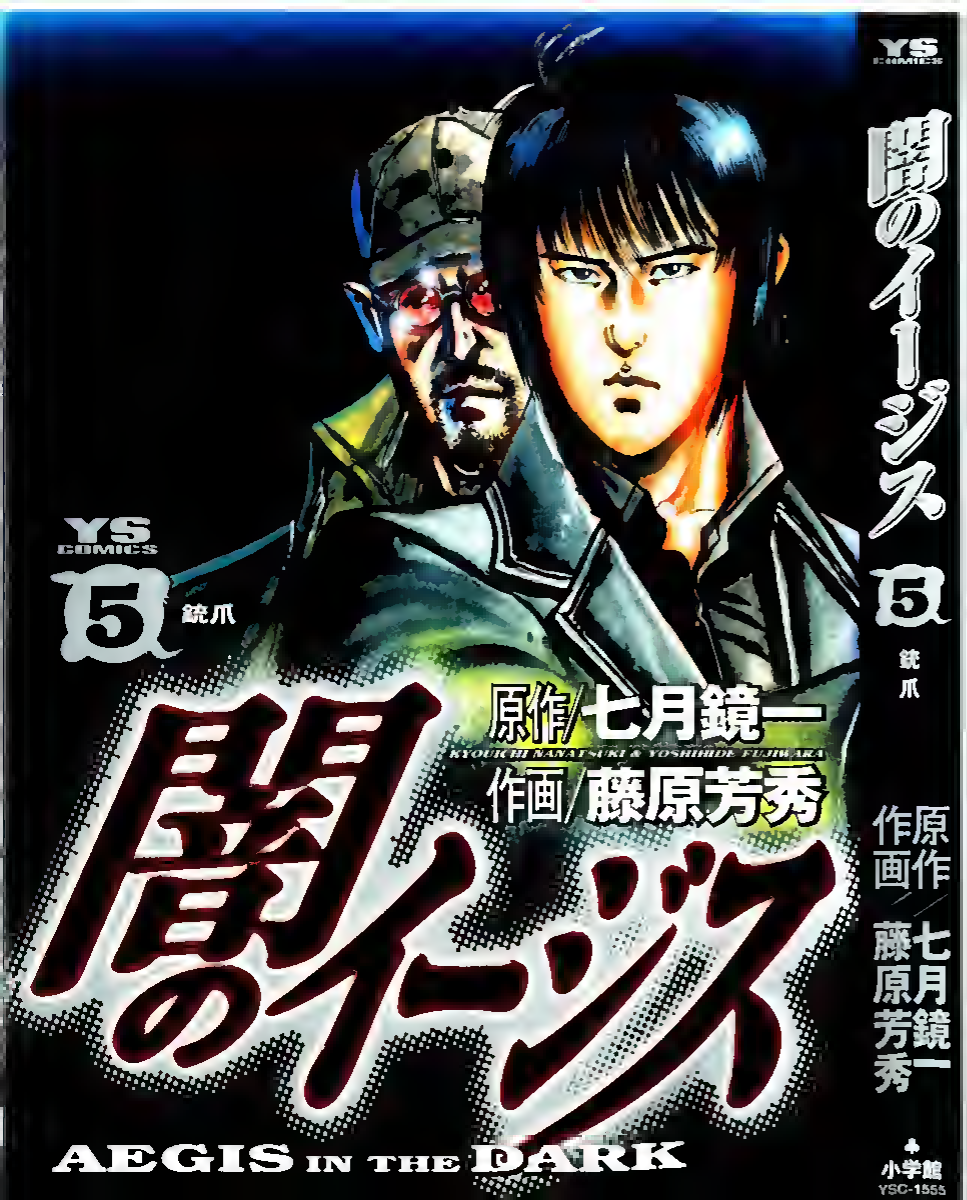

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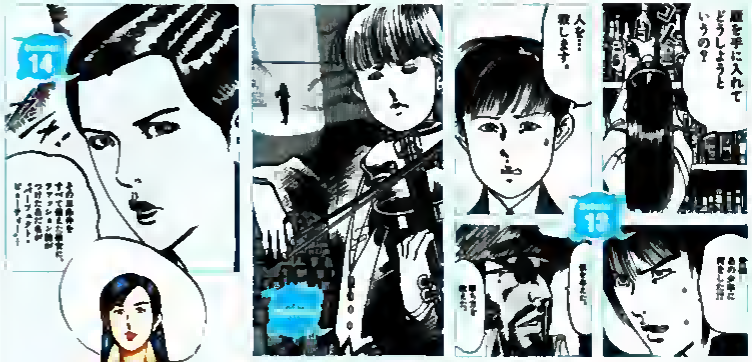

闇の終わりを、信じている…

AEGIS IN THE DARK

Defense 13 銃爪
殺人は不服従処分になった連続殺人犯・竜崎雷夫の護衛を引き受けた。彼は銀香の屋敷からたびたび骨を届けていたのである。一方で、一人の少年がバー「屋の巣」を訪れ、殺し屋を雇おうとし、自分でも殺人鏡を学ぼうとしていた。少年の名は屋屋亨。彼の彼銀を食けた骨の名は…ゼロ!

Interlude ソナチネ
屋銀の地を追われようとする民のために、弓一本で立ち上がった少年がいた…

Defense 14 復讐の女神
"パーフェクト・ビューティー"の屋名を持つトップモデル・久石銀銀の銀銀を銀銀された殺人。これまで彼女が所銀する事屋所のモデル三人が骨迫状を送りつけられ、銀われていたのである。黒迫状には「Nemesis」という銀名が…はたしてその正体とは…!?

COVER DESIGN HIDE TANABE (RYUGA G.D.)

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赤×黒　上・下巻――上條淳士
青春くん　1～7巻――とがしやすたか

原作／七月鏡一（左）
1968年 北海道出身。90年に少年サンデー原作大賞に入選しデビュー。代表作「シーザス」（作画・藤原芳秀）「ARMS」（作・萩川秀二）原案原作など。映画の企画立案、脚本なども手がける。

作画／藤原芳秀（右）
1968年 愛媛県出身。84年に第14回小学館新人コミック大賞に入選しデビュー。代表作「愛児」（原作・相田裕賞）「シーザス」（原作・七月鏡一）「コンデ・コマ」（原作・鏑田吉郎）など。

原作/七月鏡一
KYOUICHI NANATSUKI & YOSHIHIDE FUJIWARA
作画/藤原芳秀
YS COMICS
5
闇のイージス
AEGIS IN THE DARK

AEGIS IN THE DARK

KYOUICHI NANATSUKI & YOSHIHIDE FUJIWARA

Defense 38 銃爪 I *Trigger 1* 5

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Defense 45 復讐の女神 III *Nemesis 3* 157

Defense 46 復讐の女神 IV *Nemesis 4* 175

Defense.38

銃爪
Let me show you a round a strange place.
The place is the sub centre of Shinjuku.

ﾄｯﾄｯﾄｯ...
It becomes a blind spot from its surroundings, so there are exceedingly few people aware of its existence...

It's on the rooftop of a certain sky-scraper.

The bar "Nest of Geese", that's its name ...
Defense.38
銃爪 I
Trigger 1

Please ... sell me a gun ...
This is a bar; go home, boy.

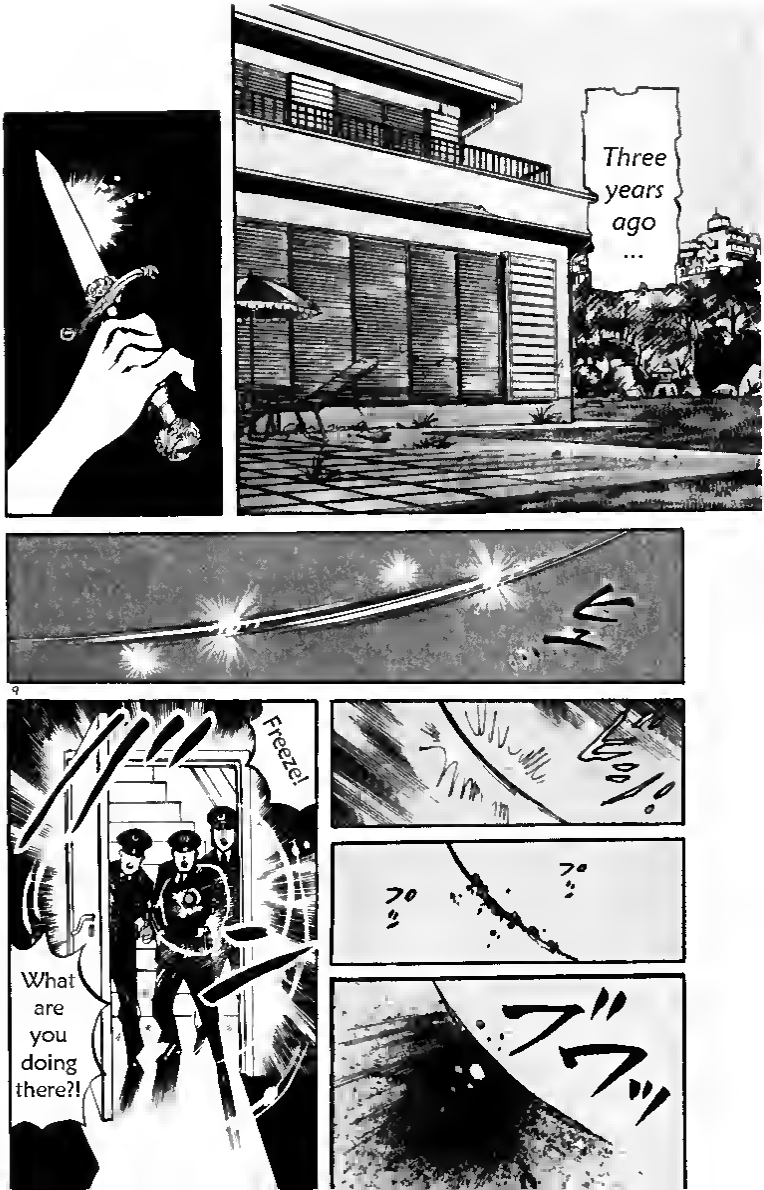
I heard from an informant and came here
He said there's a window into the underground society masquerading as a bar in Shinjuku... that, if you go there, you can get your hands on...
"info on the underground society", "contraband weapons", "services of a professional killer"..
If you come to this shop, there's nothing you can't obtain. This is that shop, right?
Heheh, professional killers, huh.
5
I'm... going to kill someone.
Tell me, if you procure a gun, what will you do?
Heh heh heh heh heh.

You've been deceived. I don't know how much you paid, but you've been had by that would-be informant from wherever.
Boy.
I don't know who you heard it from, but a shop like that doesn't even exist in this world.
This is not the shop you think it is.
Th-at's ...
I...

Kid.
Do you seriously want to kill someone?
チャ!

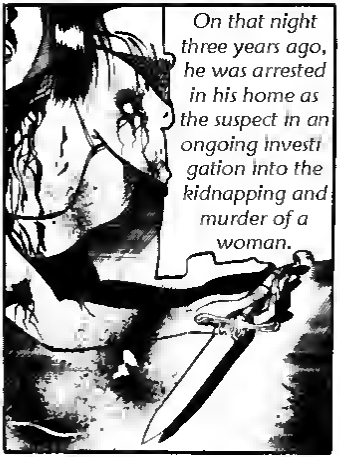
Try to take it.
!!?
Ze-ro!
If you can take it, I'll give it to you.

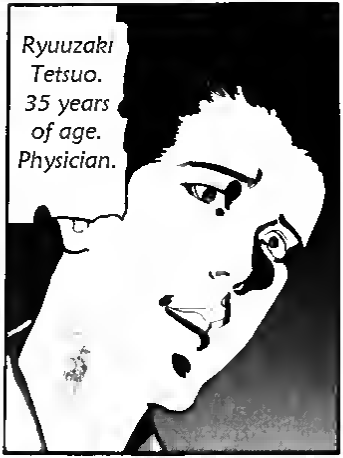
ドオオオン
うわあああ
Okay…


Three years ago ...
シャ
Freeze!
What are you doing there?!
ドゴッ

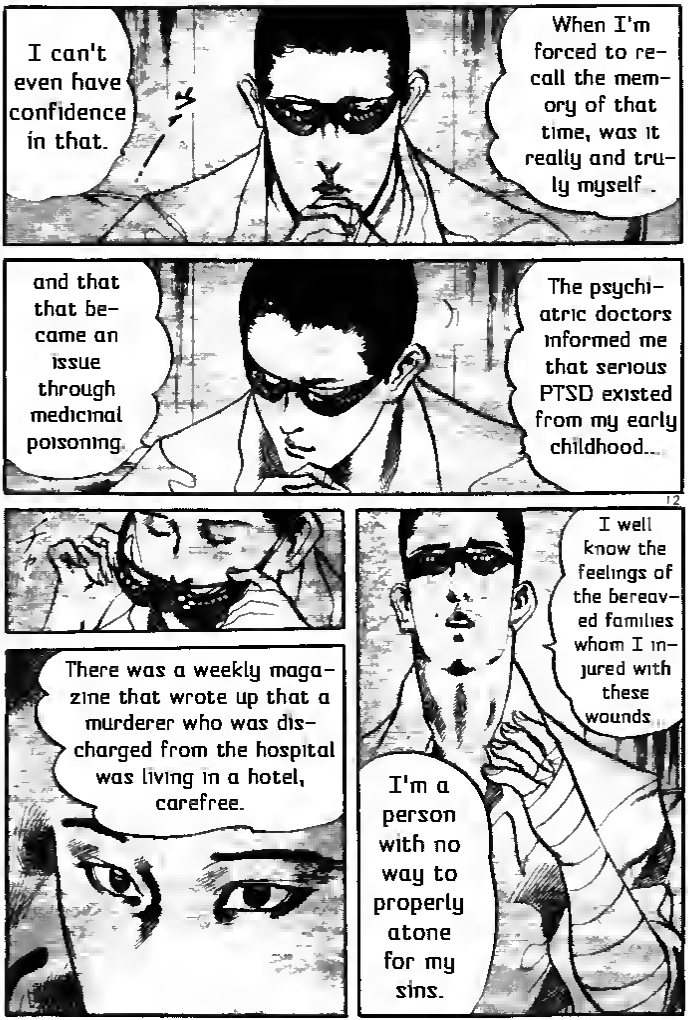
What ... the fuck ...

Kuh ...

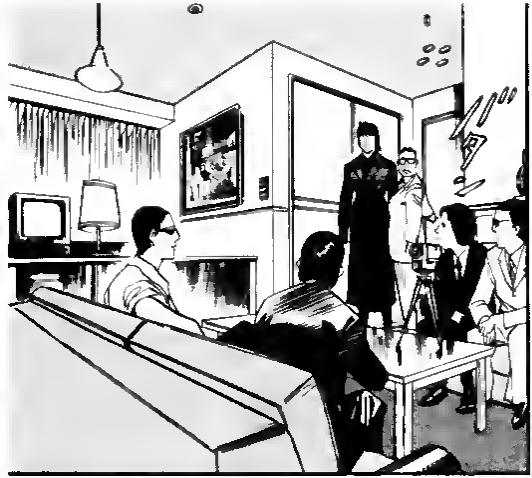

On that night three years ago, he was arrested in his home as the suspect in an ongoing investi gation into the kidnapping and murder of a woman.


Ryuuzaki Tetsuo. 35 years of age. Physician.

As his MO, he damaged various places all over their bodies with a sharp-edged tool...
lastly, he'd slit their throats and kill them.
Victim count 14, all women in their twenties.
Criminal law article 39
Actions of persons of unsound mind are to be punished
Actions of people with dimished capacity reduces the punishment
But, he was pronounced innocent at trial.


I can't even have confidence in that.
When I'm forced to recall the memory of that time, was it really and truly myself...
and that that became an issue through medicinal poisoning.
The psychiatric doctors informed me that serious PTSD existed from my early childhood...
12
There was a weekly magazine that wrote up that a murderer who was discharged from the hospital was living in a hotel, carefree.
I well know the feelings of the bereaved families whom I injured with these wounds...
I'm a person with no way to properly atone for my sins.

Naw, I just want ta regret my past and spend my penitent days. That's all.
I don't even have a raam same-ane rented ta me.
For the purpose of reparations towards the members of the bereaved families, I have disposed of my house and my assets...
Of cou-rse
Yes
Eh?
13
all right.
I am now...

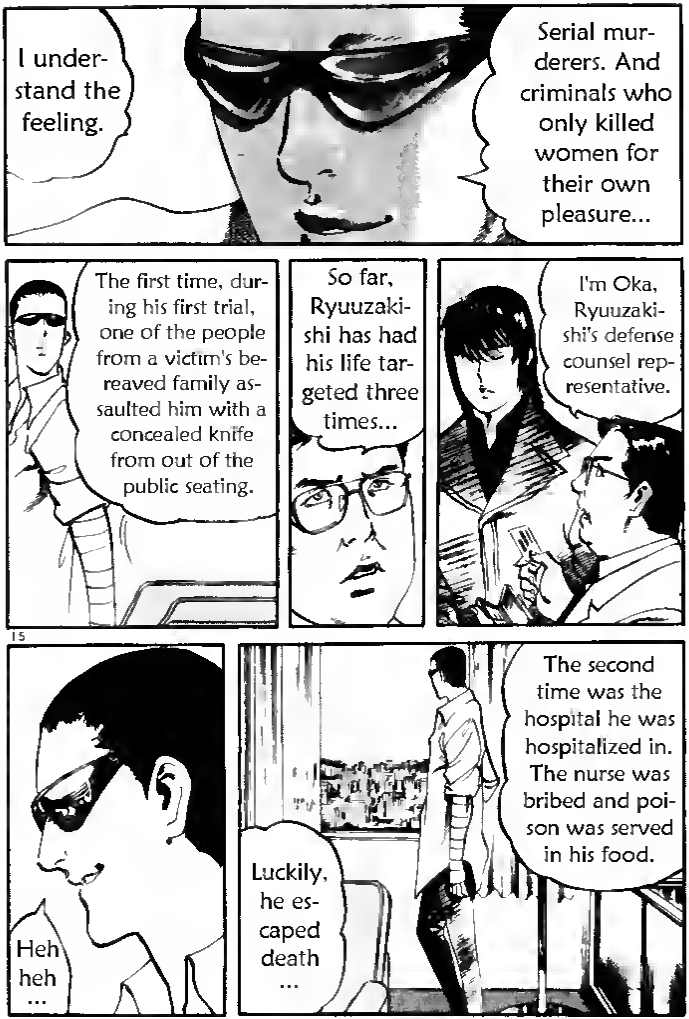

ガヤ

チカ…

14

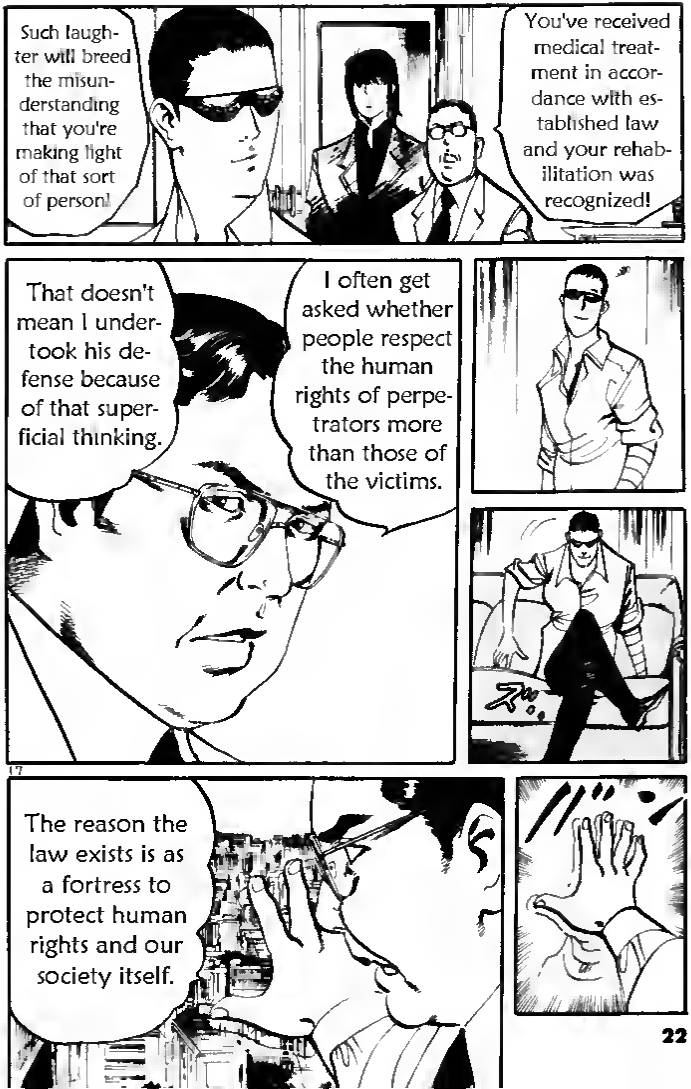
This is the "protector" Tate Karitoshi.
Ryuuzaki-san.

An expression of distaste, huh.

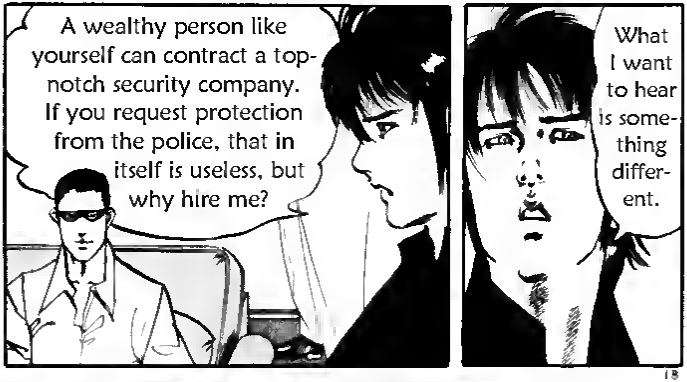

I understand the feeling.
Serial murderers. And criminals who only killed women for their own pleasure...
The first time, during his first trial, one of the people from a victim's bereaved family assaulted him with a concealed knife from out of the public seating.
So far, Ryuuzakishi has had his life targeted three times...
I'm Oka, Ryuuzakishi's defense counsel representative.
15
Heh heh ...
Luckily, he escaped death ...
The second time was the hospital he was hospitalized in. The nurse was bribed and poison was served in his food.

Someone attacked him while he was taking a walk.
The third time was one week ago.
The offender's objective is unresolved.
Ryuu-zaki-san!
To begin with, the police aren't searching for the criminal seriously.

SFX: laughing


Such laughter will breed the misunderstanding that you're making light of that sort of person!
You've received medical treatment in accordance with established law and your rehabilitation was recognized!
That doesn't mean I undertook his defense because of that superficial thinking.
I often get asked whether people respect the human rights of perpetrators more than those of the victims.
The reason the law exists is as a fortress to protect human rights and our society itself.

it ends up damaging all human rights that are protected by the fortress of the law.
If you approve of things like personal revenge ...


A wealthy person like yourself can contract a top-notch security company. If you request protection from the police, that in itself is useless, but why hire me?
What I want to hear is something different.

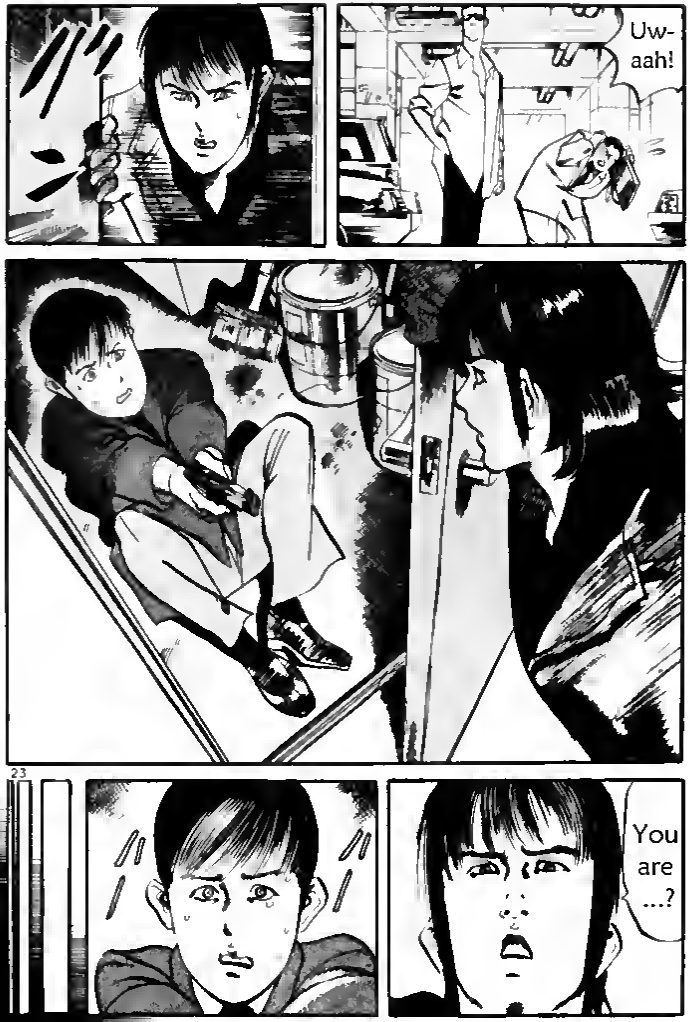
You know of the hitman known as Zero, right?
Because I obtained information that one of the bereaved families hired a person from the underground society like yourself.

Ryuu-zaki-san.
They say that, so far, you've dealt with Zero twice and protected your clients to the end.
19
Won't you shut up, Mister Lawyer?

I understand, how many people have you killed thus far? Protector-san.
I see... eight... no, nine people, is it?
I'll undertake the guard.
First, let's check out of this hotel; we need to change locations.
Ah, um ...

Stay put.
Eh?
Wah ?!

ドドド


Uw-
aah!
23
You
are
...?

You didn't close your eyes, huh, boy...
Hire me.
I'll teach you how to shoot a gun.
How to kill someone!

Why is ... a child ...?!
How to kill some-one!
うあああ
あああ
25
7

Defense.39
銃爪Ⅱ
Trigger 2

うわぁぁあ
It's point less!

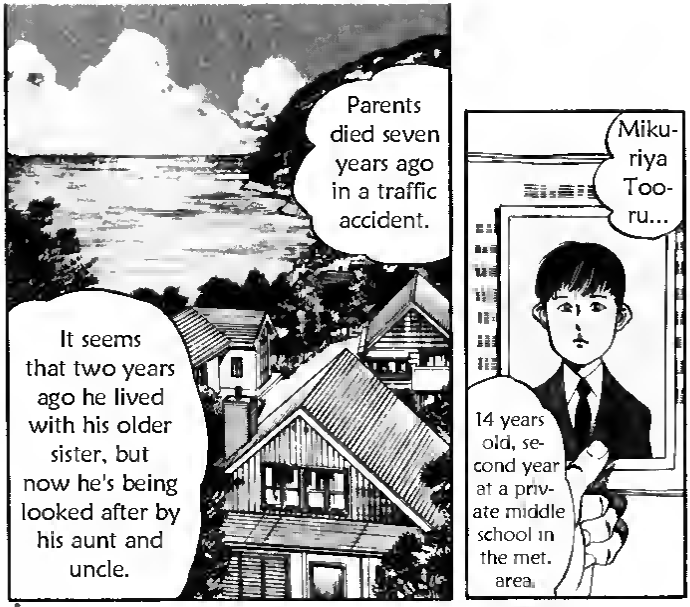
タタ
ガン
Wait!
ガラ ガラ
タタタ
タン
バン
タタタ

Zero! Get out of there!
I refuse, as that's my client.
Cli-ent?
A brat whose older sister was murdered by the serial killer Ryuuzaki Tetsuo...
He hired me, saying he wanted revenge.

I taught him how to shoot it.
I gave him a gun.
Bastard... what did you do to that boy?!
ZE-RO
Just that much.
ﾌﾌﾌ!
Do you think that you, who won't kill
can stop me, someone who feels no pain?
ﾊﾞｼｭ!
5

ゴゴゴゴ…
ガ!
Try if you can stop me ...
カ!
"pro-tec-tor".
ガラガラ

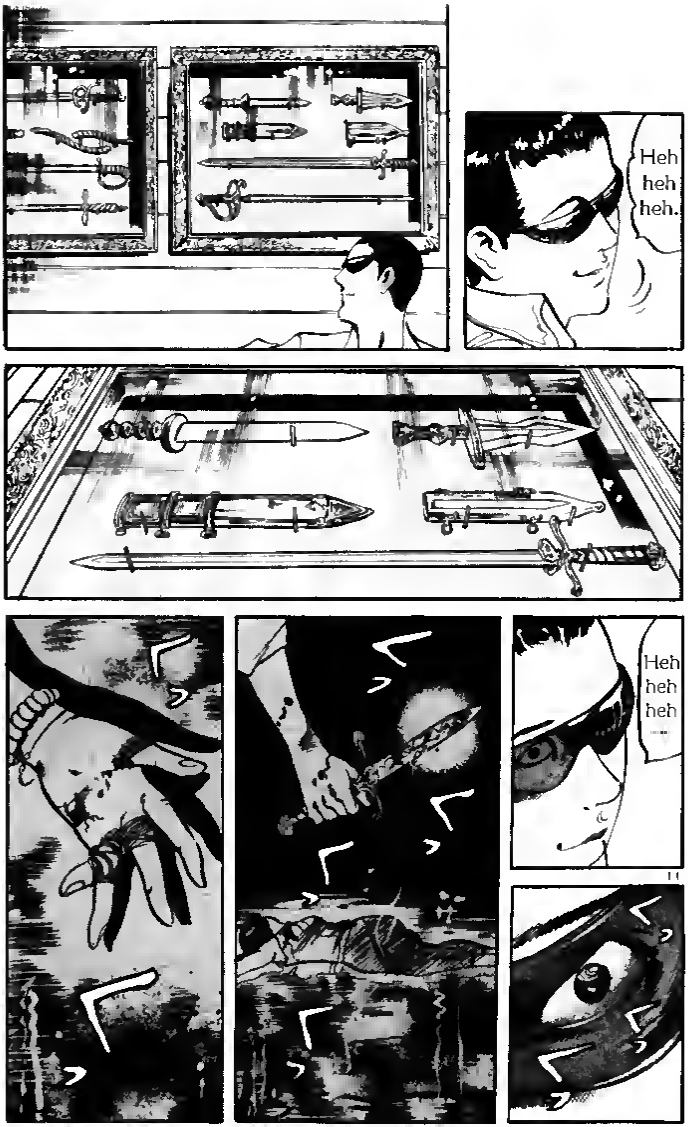
Zero ...!!
Don't make that kid kill ...!
Ryuu-zaki... san?


Parents died seven years ago in a traffic accident.
It seems that two years ago he lived with his older sister, but now he's being looked after by his aunt and uncle.
Mikuriya Tooru...
14 years old, second year at a private middle school in the met. area.

If you understand that that boy is targeting Ryuuzaki, why not notify the police?
His sister... was Ryuuzaki Tetsuo's eigth victim.

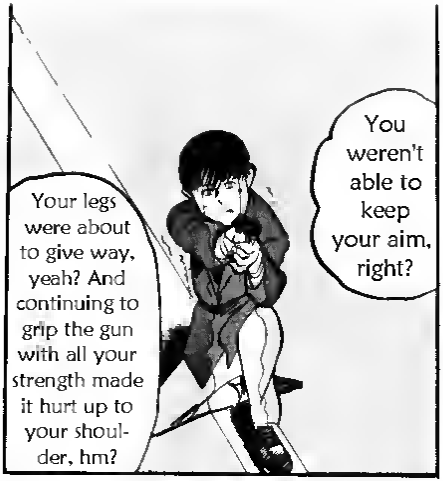
A mere 14-year-old brat bravely aims at the fiendish murderer to shoot his sister's foe ...
Doesn't that story just move you to tears?
Hahaha, those're unreasonable negotiations to the lawyer man.
Things like, "Has the criminal really lost his mind?" ...
and, "Let's retry him."
Try letting the world know that story; the criticism against me would strengthen.
In general, do you think that man defended me because he seriously believes in the justice of the law?

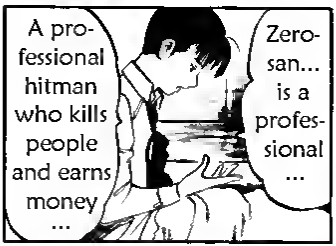
Heheh, you know pretty good rental cottages, dontcha, 'Protector'-san.
Ryuu-zaki!
For taking on my guard.
Don't you have any regrets?
I see, professionals have to be like that.
He heh heh...
It's not that I know what kind of person you are.
I just protect the target of the contract... that's all.
Even during the day, keep the curtains closed; don't go out.

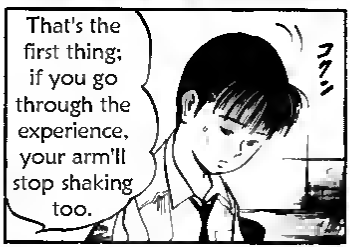

Heh
heh
heh.
Heh
heh
heh...

How did it feel to point a gun at someone and shoot?
Big sis!
You couldn't think at all, could you?

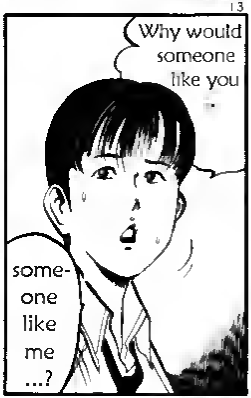
As expected, you couldn't remember half the things I taught you.


You weren't able to keep your aim, right?
Your legs were about to give way, yeah? And continuing to grip the gun with all your strength made it hurt up to your shoulder, hm?


A professional hitman who kills people and earns money ...
Zero-san... is a professional ...


That's the first thing; if you go through the experience, your arm'll stop shaking too.
フクン

13

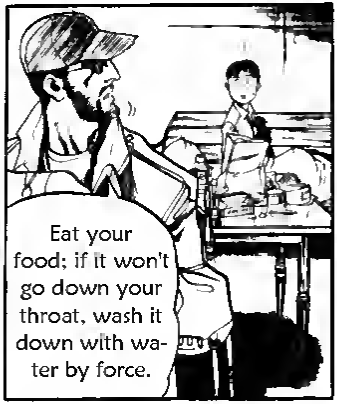

Why would someone like you
someone like me ...?

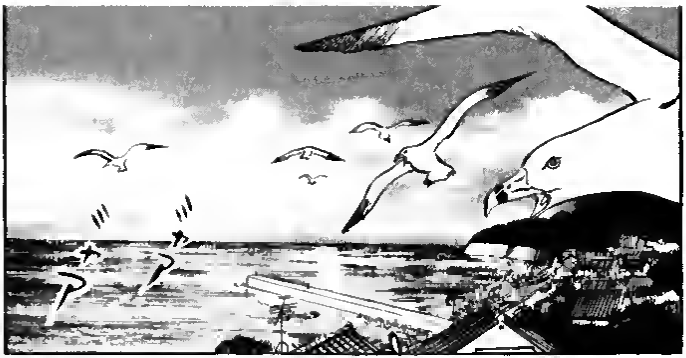
Because I got paid.

There's no other reason.

14

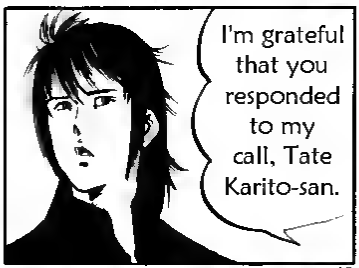
When you kill people ...
in the end, willpower and strength mean everything.


Eat your food; if it won't go down your throat, wash it down with water by force.


カァ カァ

ガアアア
Because, in our world, you're famous, "protector" Shield of Aegis...

ガ ガ ー…

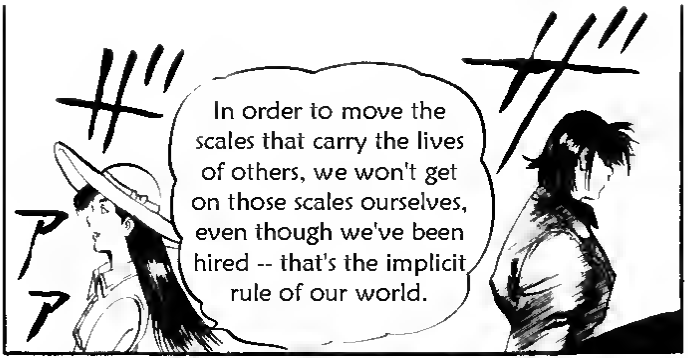

I'm grateful that you responded to my call, Tate Karito-san.

15

チャプ
チャプ

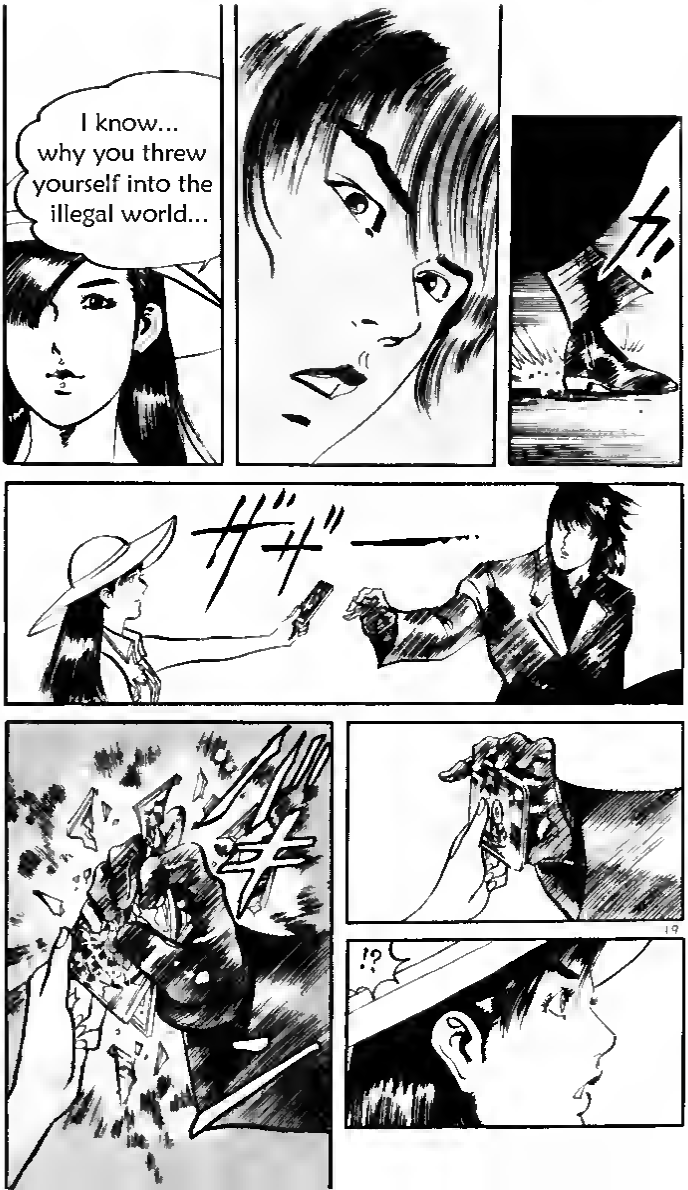
Bartender at the "Nest of Geese", Kashihara Nanase...
And you are?
I've also heard one more rumour.
The "Nest of Geese", the country's largest informant and illegal small arms smuggler...
Let's speak frankly.
Please withdraw from Ryuuzaki Tetsuo's case; if you officially cancel, no dishonour should stain your legend, either.
"Nest of Geese", the mediation representative for hitmen who aim at those acting as agents of revenge!

Now, there are three snipers keeping you in their cross-hairs.
I've prepared thrice the amount of money of the re-numeration you receive.
ヒュウ…
ヒュウ…
ヒュウ!
Neither threats nor bribery are effective, hmm...
A man just like the rumours ...
ゴゴゴ…

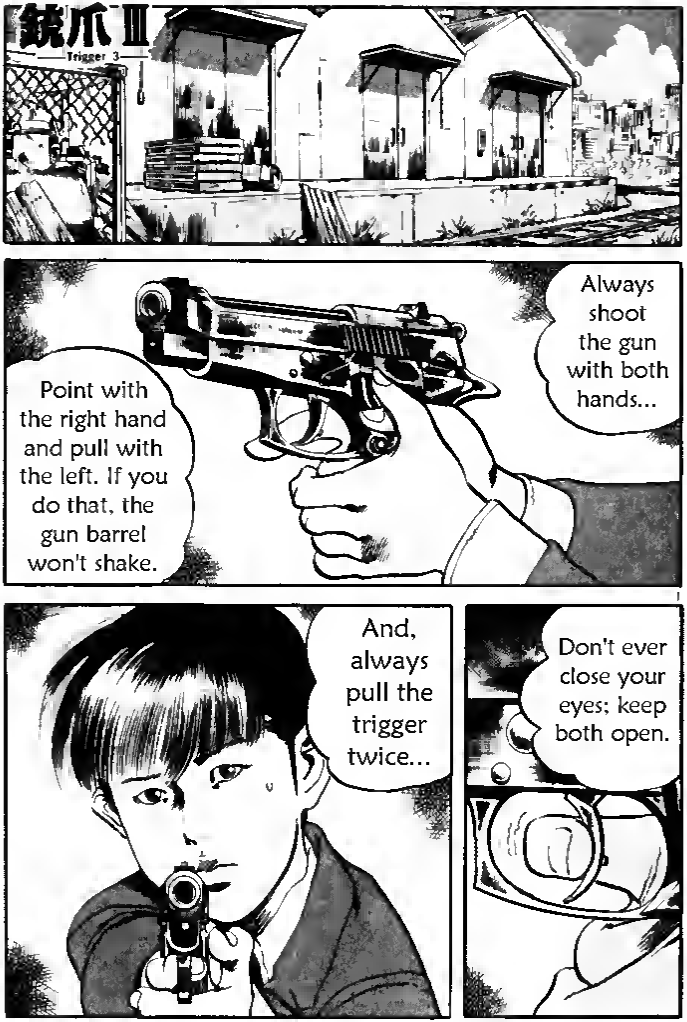

In order to move the scales that carry the lives of others, we won't get on those scales ourselves, even though we've been hired -- that's the implicit rule of our world.

You'll both end up destroyed together this way!
However, you and Zero are different... you want to calmly place your own lives on other people's scales!

The phantom terrorist... I'll hand you information regarding "Butterfly"!
I'll also place something on the scales that carries the weight to move you.


I know...
why you threw
yourself into the
illegal world...
カ!
ガガ
!?

What moves me is neither money nor life nor information!
It is only the voice that this right arm commands!
Why ?!
Kashihara Nanase of the 'Nest of Geese', if that is your name, you'd do well to remember...
20


銃爪 Ⅲ
Trigger 3
Always shoot the gun with both hands...
Point with the right hand and pull with the left. If you do that, the gun barrel won't shake.
And, always pull the trigger twice...
Don't ever close your eyes; keep both open.

Defense.40
銃爪Ⅲ
—Trigger 3—

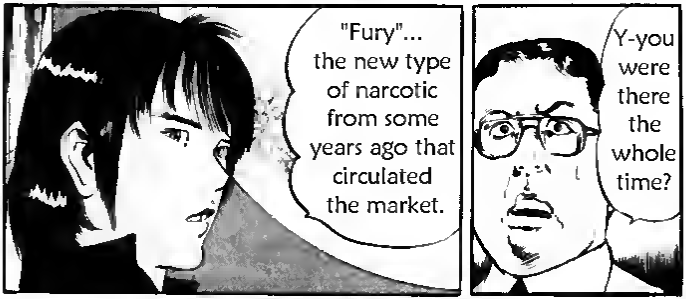
カン
Zero-san... who is the person protecting Ryuuzaki?
ガガ...
If you shoot all of these bullets, even your aim will become a bit more settled.
カラカラカラ...
3
He'll protect any sort of trash.
I'll tidy up any sort of trash so long as there's money.
"Protector"?
The "protector".

I'll get him.
You just pay attention to Ryuuzaki.
Am I...
able to kill that person?
The common factor is, as long as we get paid, we don't generally pick our targets.
Why not just remove the coat in summertime?
4
I met with Aegis.
If I felt the "heat".
The usual sweltering appearance, Zero.

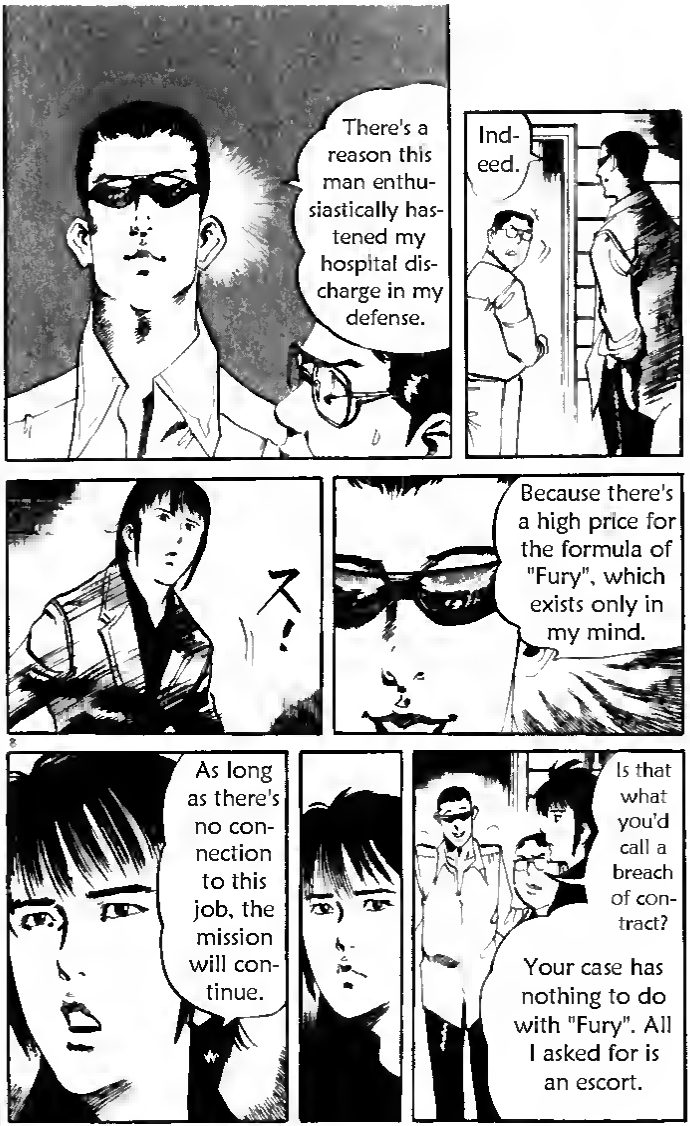
Since the contract was established in my shop, I can't do that. I'll see this to the end with my own eyes.
Don't shadow him. This is not a job I overlooked you for.
he's very similar to you.
I understand... you obsess over that man because ..
5

Yes, just like that ...
I'll hand over the formula for "Fury" without fail.
Yes... he's fine for now...
In accordance with Ryuuzaki's demands, his safety has been confirmed... there's also been no pursuit by the media.

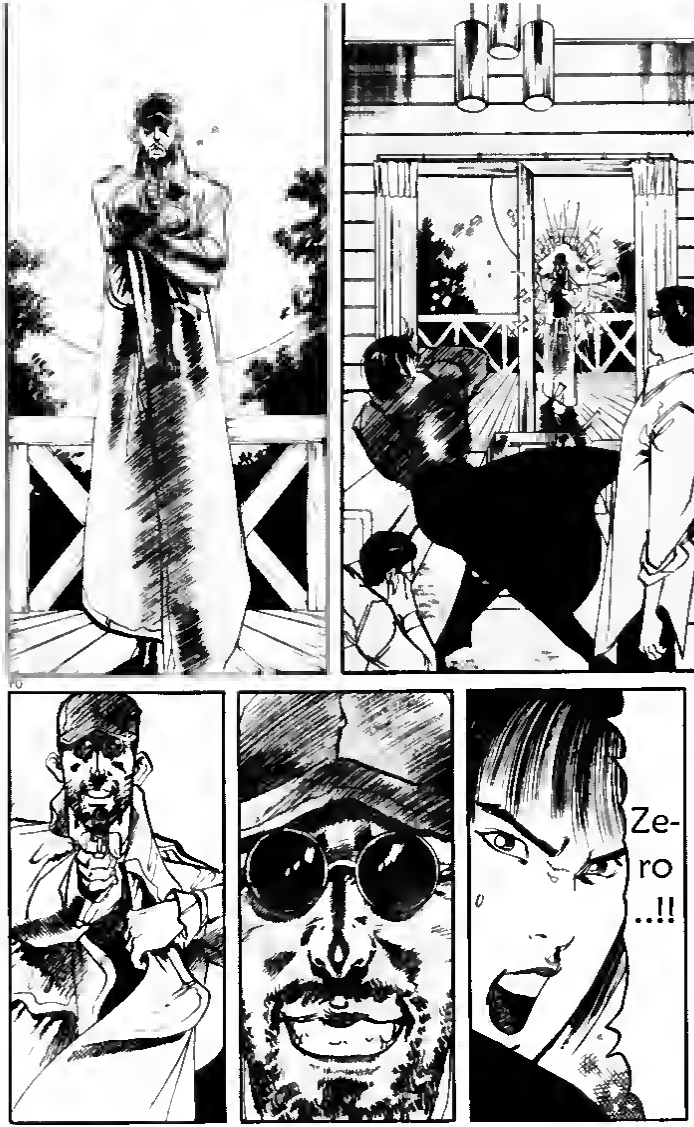
#"
#"
!...


"Fury"... the new type of narcotic from some years ago that circulated the market.
Y-you were there the whole time?

The source was unknown; there was also a theory among some that it was leaked from a medical research facility... but does this mean that Ryuuzaki Tetsuo was the creator?
I hear it's an expensive addictive drug that makes you savour both ups and downs separately.


There's a reason this man enthusiastically hastened my hospital discharge in my defense.
Indeed.
ス!
Because there's a high price for the formula of "Fury", which exists only in my mind.
As long as there's no connection to this job, the mission will continue.
Is that what you'd call a breach of contract?
Your case has nothing to do with "Fury". All I asked for is an escort.

Get down!


Ze-
ro
..!!

ドン
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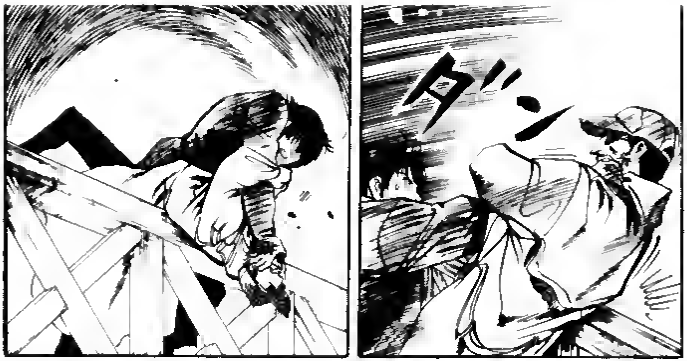
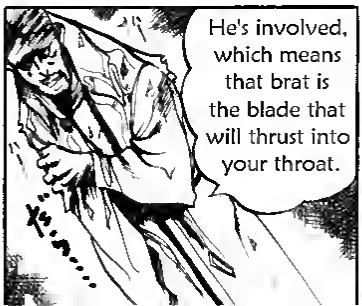
キュッ
キュッ

ガン


ダン
バキ バキ

ハア、ハア、
Zero... don't make that child kill!


He's involved, which means that brat is the blade that will thrust into your throat.

ガバ

Do you, as an agent of revenge, have the ability to stop me or that boy?!
"Butterfly"... that's the name of the terrorist you're pursuing, right?
14
Your fist
cannot stop buckshot!
I was thinking of it the whole time...
of ways to kill you!

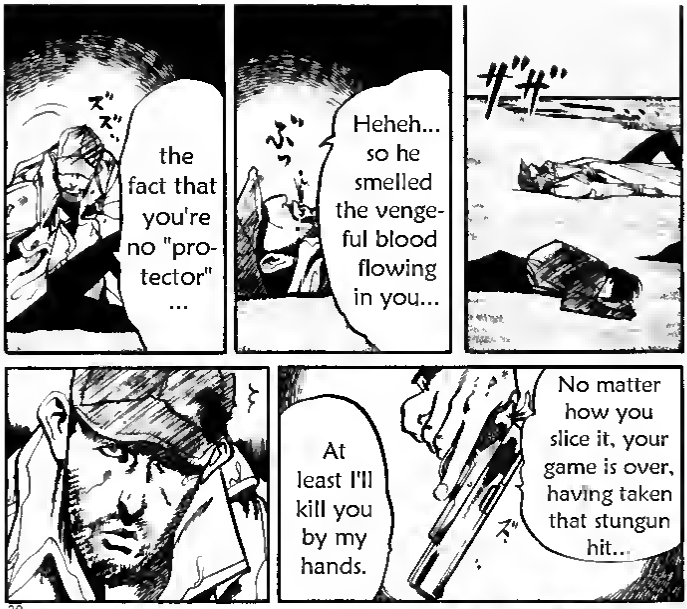
ガッ
ガッ

I should have thought of that... the only person besides myself who doesn't take off his coat, even in summer...
would have Kelvar woven into it ...
You brought down Zero, yes?
Well then, the contract with you is completed.
!

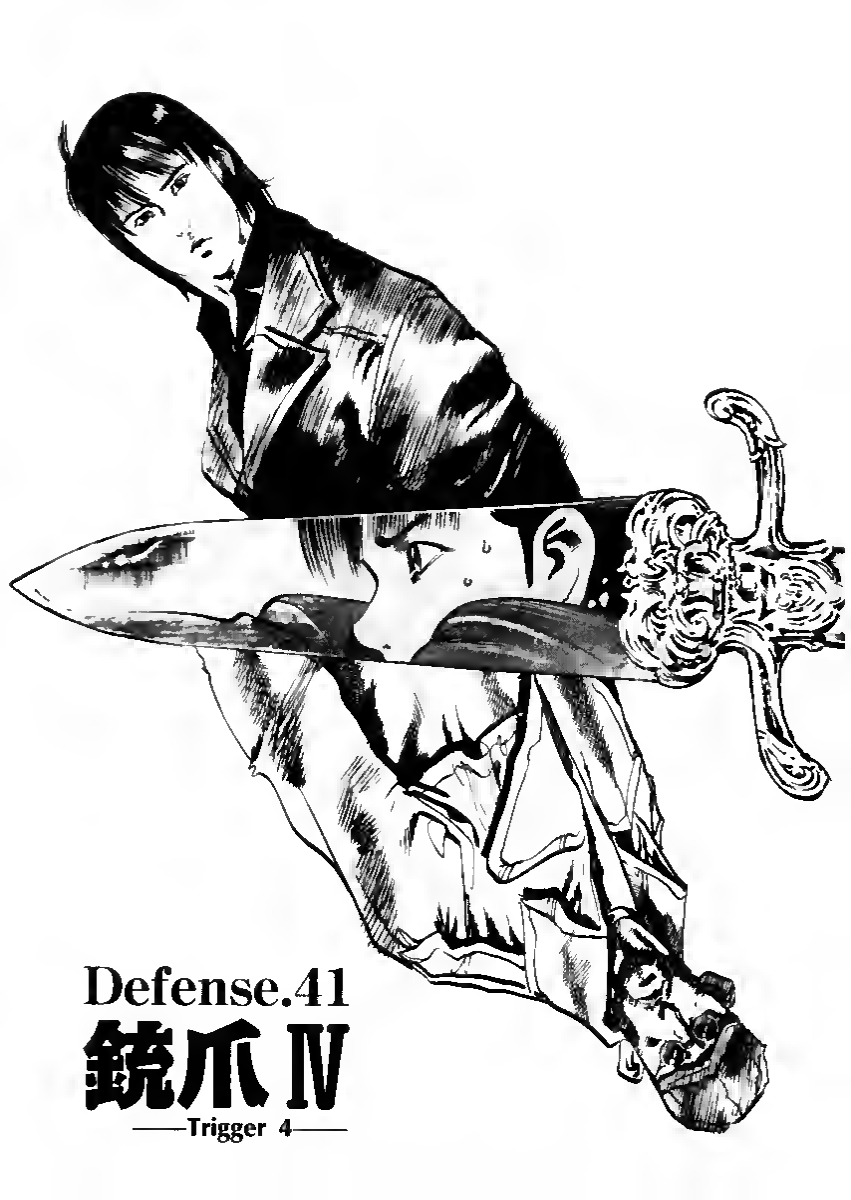
I thought this would be effective.
A plug-shooting type stungun... a remodeled item. Someone who takes a blow from this just about has a heart attack. It'll be impossible to move for a few days...
Heheh... even if there had been no drugs, this was the plan.
I prefer that there be no one who knows of my actions in escaping overseas.

"Fury" is my drug.
I don't want you to be able to take a piece of the action; I want to negotiate directly with them.
W.. why ...
It's just like you said; even if you escape, there's nothing better than having there be no one who knows your situation.
You're just realizing that now? Mister would-be human rights activist?
Mu ... murderer ...
18
Hahaha, and you were the one who expedited my medical treatment?

Take the reward and disappear; that's what a professional is.
I won't kill you, Protector-san... because you carried out the mission for me.
It smells intensely, the blood of killers!
I'm glad to have met you. You're the same as me...
SFX laughter
What's more, you gave me this delicious-looking prey!

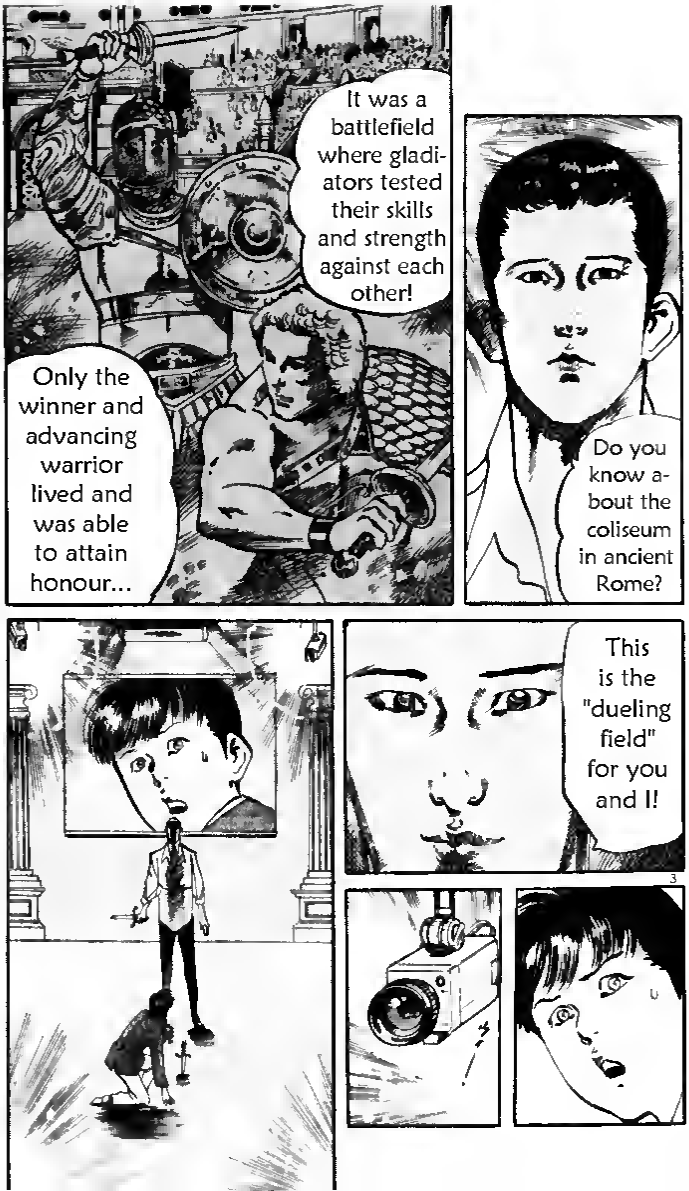

the fact that you're no "protector" ...
Heheh... so he smelled the vengeful blood flowing in you...
No matter how you slice it, your game is over, having taken that stungun hit...
At least I'll kill you by my hands.

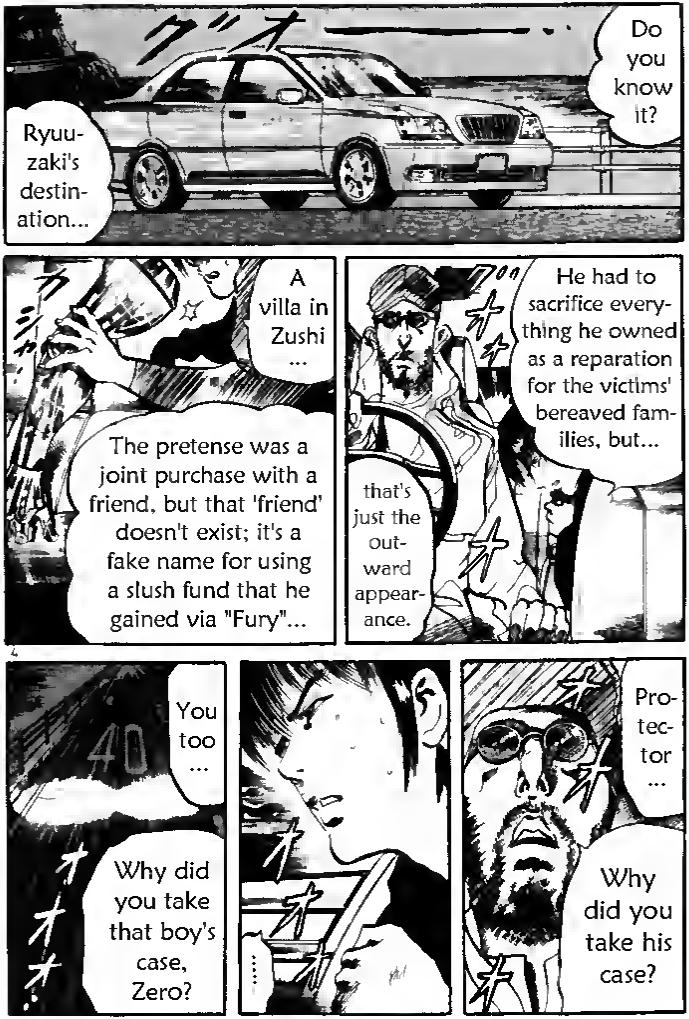
Wh ... at ...?



Defense.41
銃爪Ⅳ
—Trigger 4—

Do you know where you are?
You're Mikuriya Tooru, right?
Are you... awake?
Come, pick up your weapon, please...


It was a battlefield where gladiators tested their skills and strength against each other!
Only the winner and advancing warrior lived and was able to attain honour...
Do you know about the coliseum in ancient Rome?
This is the "dueling field" for you and I!
3


Ryuu-zaki's destin-ation...
Do you know it?
A villa in Zushi ...
The pretense was a joint purchase with a friend, but that 'friend' doesn't exist; it's a fake name for using a slush fund that he gained via "Fury"...
He had to sacrifice every-thing he owned as a reparation for the victims' bereaved fam-ilies, but...
that's just the out-ward appear-ance.
You too ...
Why did you take that boy's case, Zero?
Pro-tec-tor ...
Why did you take his case?

Don't hold back.
Be-cause you're the one ...
who tried to kill me!

Come, pick up your blade. The "duel" has only just begun.
...it -- it hurts!
want to win!
I really...
and triumph!
I will conquer!!
I'll fight you...
win...
kill you...
trample you...

Or... will you surrender?
If so, would you end it with this?
I tie their left fingers with that wire...
to make it stick out in front.

The loser's life is entrusted to the audience!
If it's decided that you were not a person suitable enough for the hero... the winner slits the loser's throat and settles it! That's the rule!
Throw away your weapon, kneel, and hold your left arm high!
That's the rule in the coliseum for when you surrender to your opponent!
...I laid her to rest without causing her to suffer.
You... my sister... like this...?

When you... grip a gun... use both hands...
ガ

Ha!
You just get funnier and funnier, you know, kid?
Point with your right hand and pull with your left!
When you grip a gun, always use both hands...
Gun?
ズズ…

ガキ

Wh...
at...?
キン

And
always
pull...
ひ?

Always pull the trigger twice ...!
No way ...
For me to be cut...
that's not in the rules ...!!

Up until now, everyone trembled and begged for their lives! So why...?!
Those eyes!
There's no way! No way!!
ダダダ
13
ウァアァア

G-
give
it...

バシィ!
kill him ...!
Let... me...
15
I finally got here!
So please ... let me kill him ...!!
Just to kill him!
I came this far!

Don't become dirtied ...
like us...
ドッ!
う
うぉあぁあぁあぁあぁ
あ
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あ
Hahaha... why won't you kill me? Why not let that brat kill me?

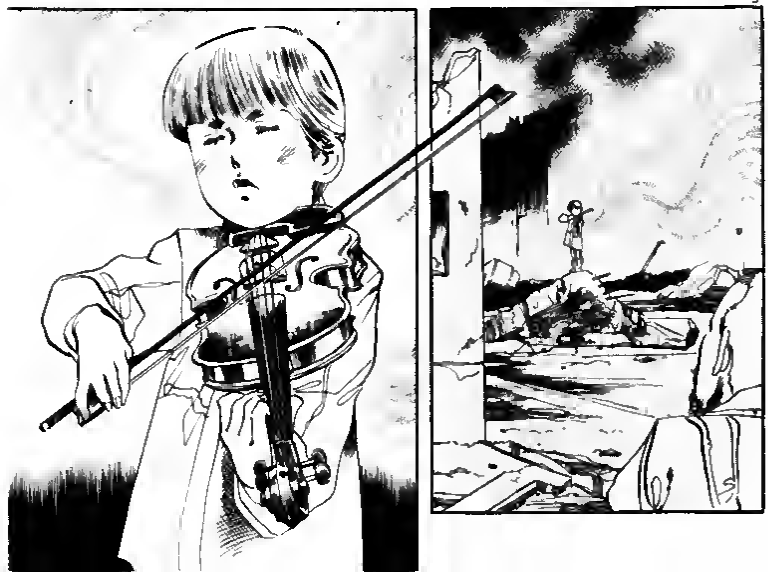
I'm "re-pentant"! There's no death penalty for me!!
Once some years pass, I'll definitely be discharged! The formula for "Fury" is in my head!
Your contract with me is over, no?
Hya ha ha ha ha ha!
I won't end the game until I die!
It just breeds money! Bring on the spoils!
17
ス、

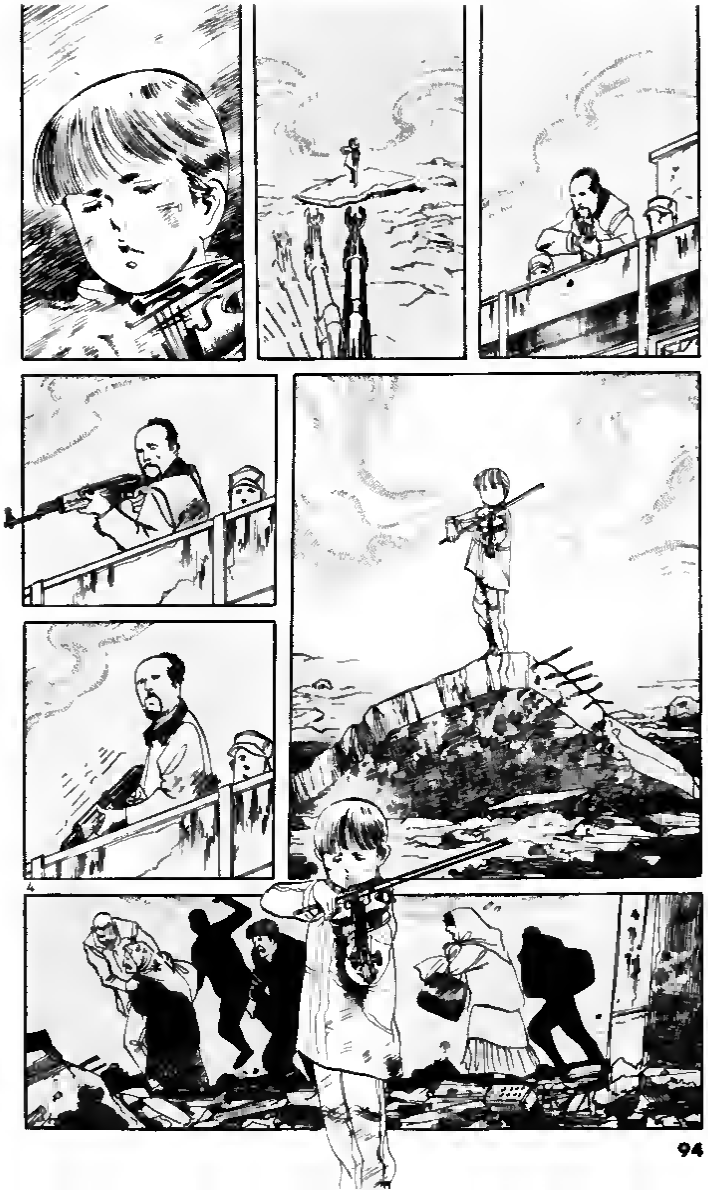
ゴオオ
Even so, I'm ...
a "pro-tector" ...!

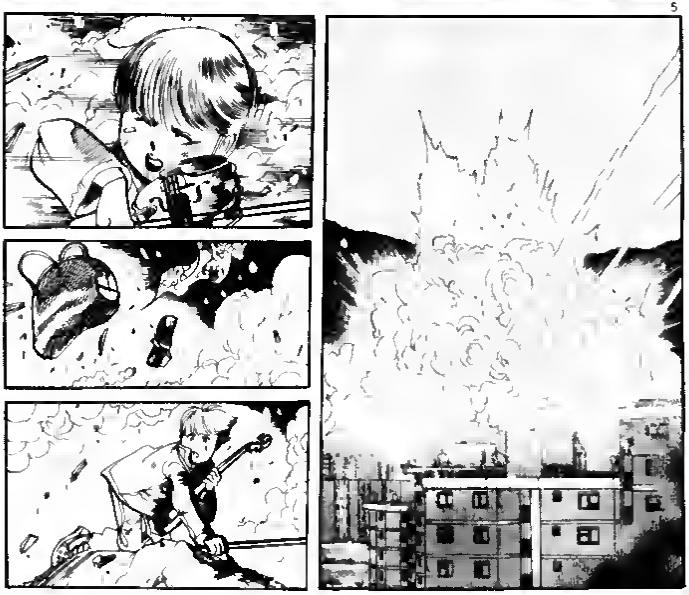
I'll take you.
No need. Transport the brat.
19
That child grew up and became a famous hitman for the purpose of revenge...
A long time ago, over twenty years, there was a child whose whole family was killed.

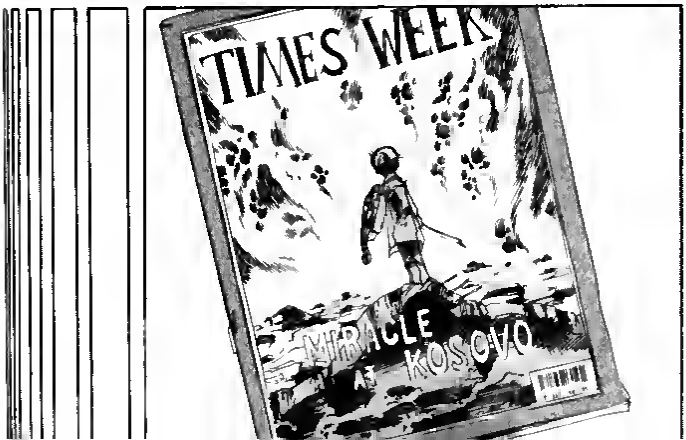
However, there was no one to know whether that revenge ever got carried out... or something like that...
Did you take that child's case because he resembled your old self?
Just killing time ...

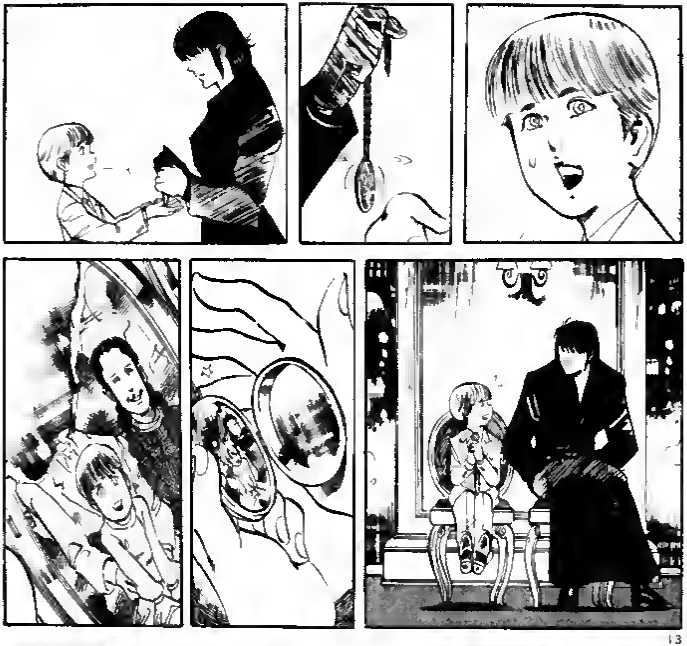
Defense.42
ソナチネ
——Sonatine——

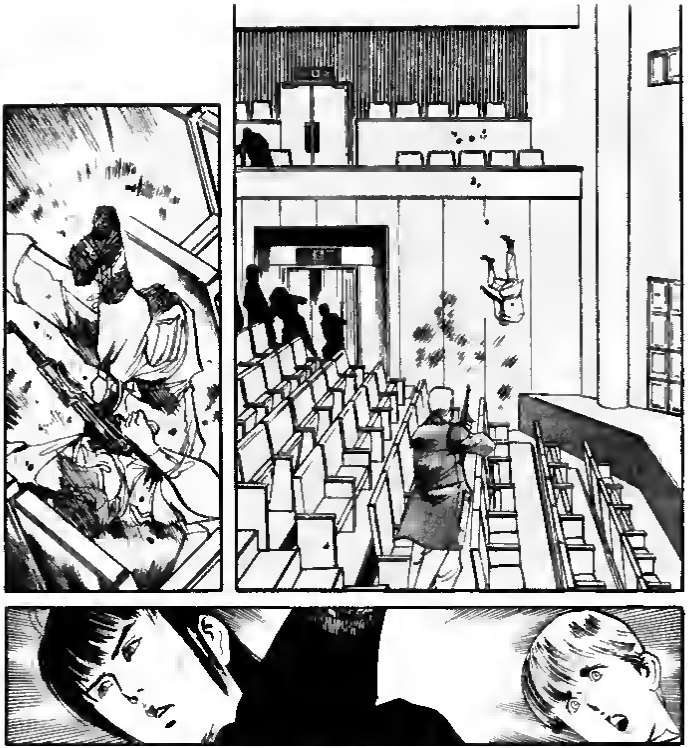






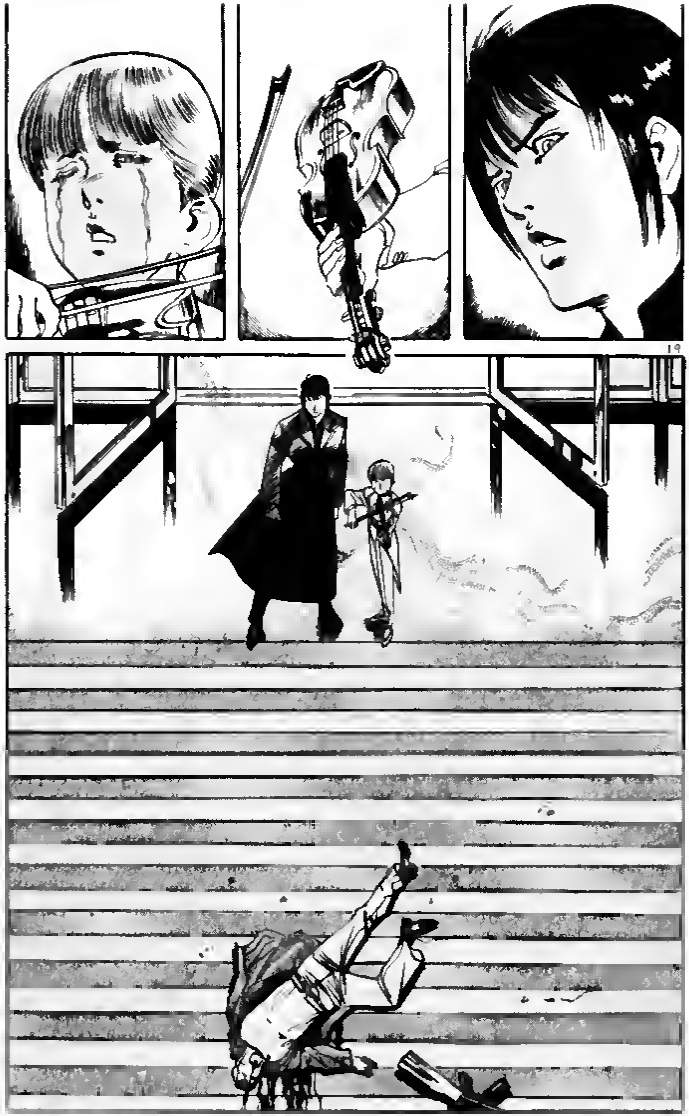

TIMES WEEK
MIRACLE
AT
KOSOVO

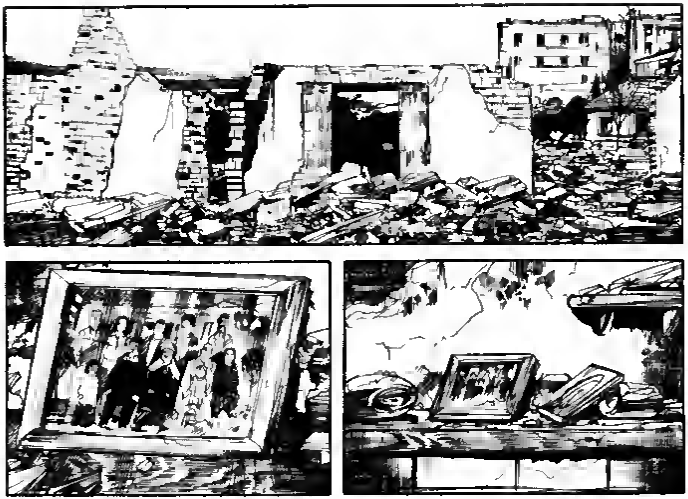




16

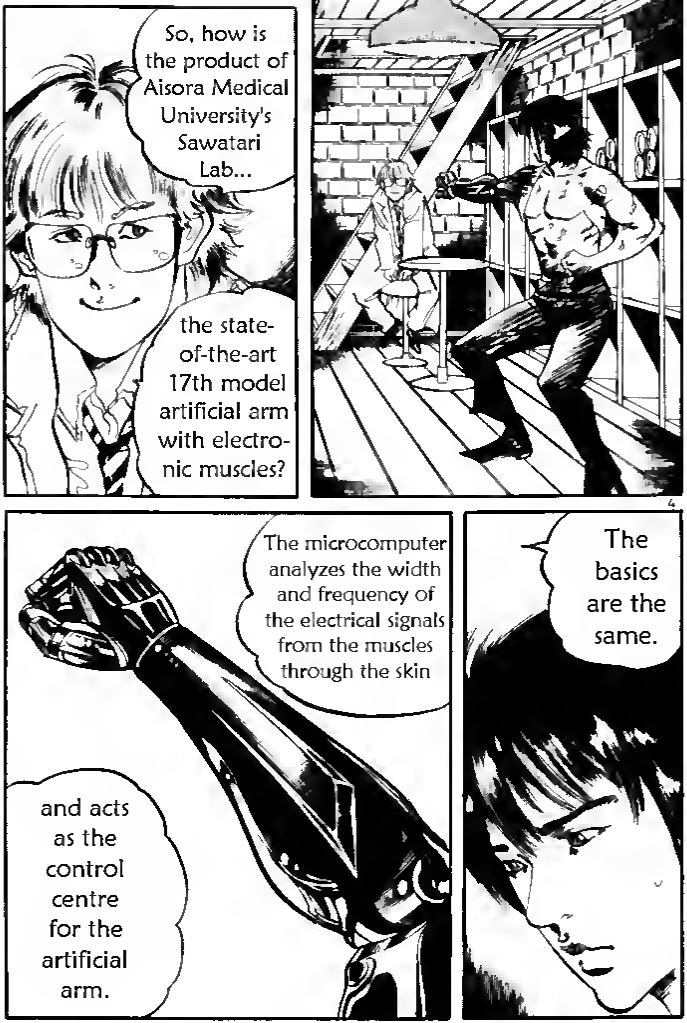
Father...!


19

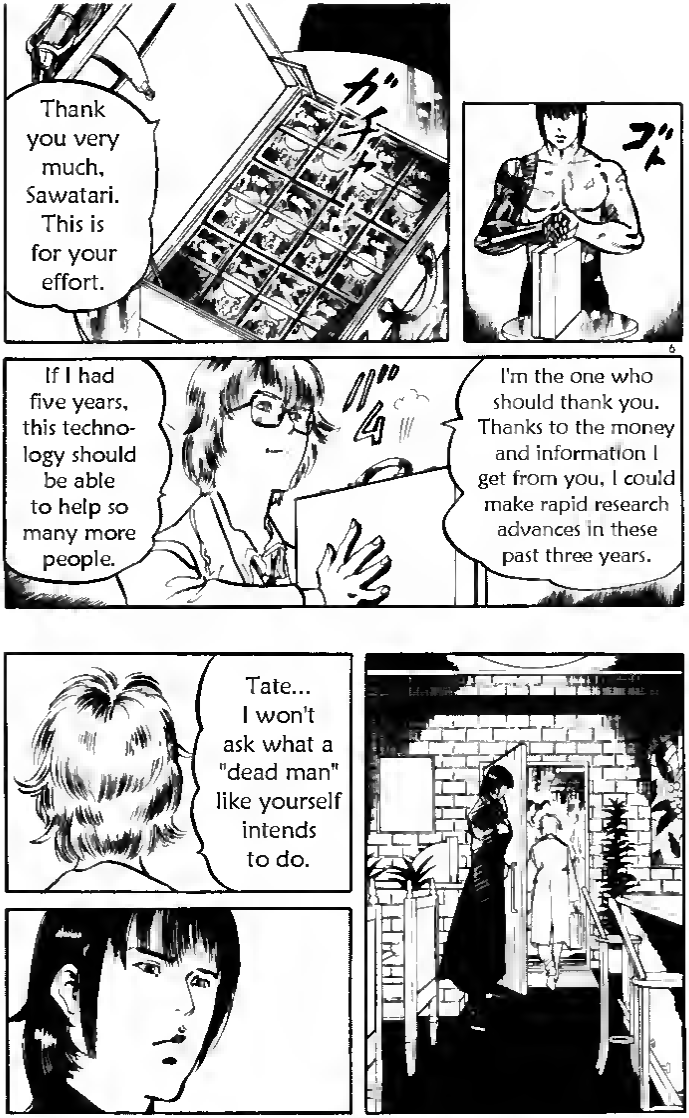

20

ハア
ハア
Defense.13
復讐の女神Ⅰ
—Nemesis—
ハア
ハア

Defense.43
復讐の女神 I
Nemesis 1


So, how is the product of Aisora Medical University's Sawatari Lab...
the state-of-the-art 17th model artificial arm with electronic muscles?
The microcomputer analyzes the width and frequency of the electrical signals from the muscles through the skin
and acts as the control centre for the artificial arm.
The basics are the same.

I've been thinking about this since I received your order three years ago.
"An artificial arm that moves like a real arm and is capable of withstanding the force of a magnum bullet"...
It doesn't move with a motor, but with artificial muscles that are delicate down to the molecular level.
Flexibility is increased by 20%.


Thank you very much, Sawatari. This is for your effort.
ガ
ゴ
If I had five years, this technology should be able to help so many more people.
I'm the one who should thank you. Thanks to the money and information I get from you, I could make rapid research advances in these past three years.
Tate... I won't ask what a "dead man" like yourself intends to do.

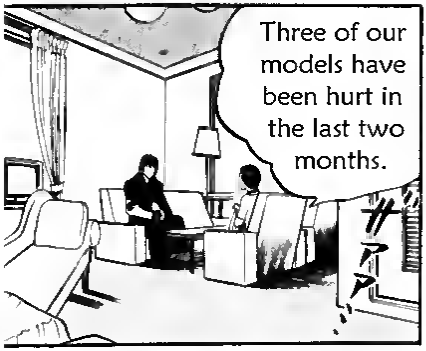
I'll wait for the day that you return to being a "living man".
But don't forget that the artificial arms I make are intended to save people.
7
Ka-rito ...
a job just came in.

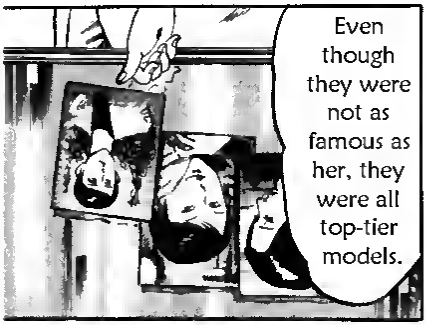
The beauty of a goddess.
The founder of the magazine "Lucire" said that a successful model needs three things.
And the heart of a warrior.
The flair of a devil.

Note in English

Hisaishi Miharu ...
I'd like you to protect her.
Cosmetics, soft drinks, travel agencies, train companies... just this year, seven firms have already hired her for advertisements and posters. She also appeared on the covers of eight magazines.
She is truly our money-maker.
That's enough! How long is this going to go on for?!

The heart of a warrior ...?

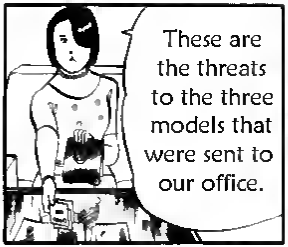

Three of our models have been hurt in the last two months.

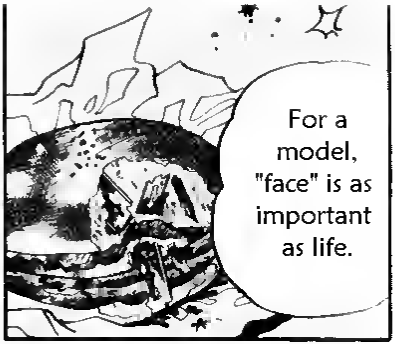

Even though they were not as famous as her, they were all top-tier models.

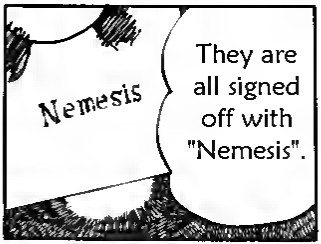
It's even worse.
Life threats ?

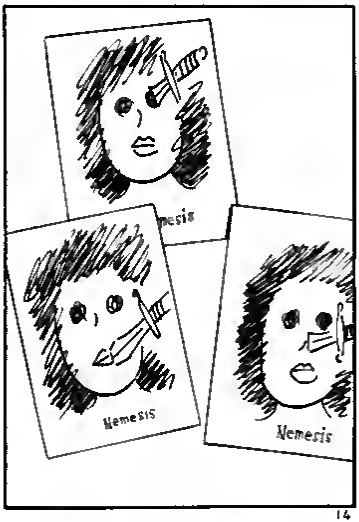
Such personality...
is the reason she has so many enemies.

The first was hurt in the "eyes".
The second, the "nose".
And the third, the "lips".

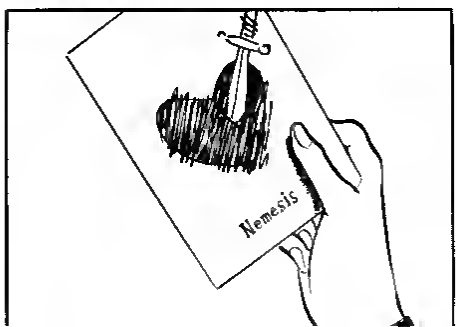

These are the threats to the three models that were sent to our office.


For a model, "face" is as important as life.


Nemesis
They are all signed off with "Nemesis".


Nemesis
Nemesis
Nemesis

"Ne-me-sis" ...?


Nemesis

And this one came last week.

Miharu-chan, he's the one I told you about.
I've heard about you, "Protector".
You're a scum that would protect even criminals for money.
Miharu-chan!

……
I'd never let such a person follow me around all the time!
I refuse!
Now what ?!
Don't drink it!
Toono-san, make him leave!
ﾁｭｰ!

A special reagent from a doctor acquaintance.
There are many kinds of tasteless and odourless poisons; this reagent would produce a reaction and crystallize it.
That is...?
You're kidding me! Are you saying there's poison in there?!

Inject the poison with a syringe and seal the hole with quick dry glue.

No way. How could poison get inside a sealed bottle in the hotel fridge?

From now on, anything that goes in your mouth must be checked by me.

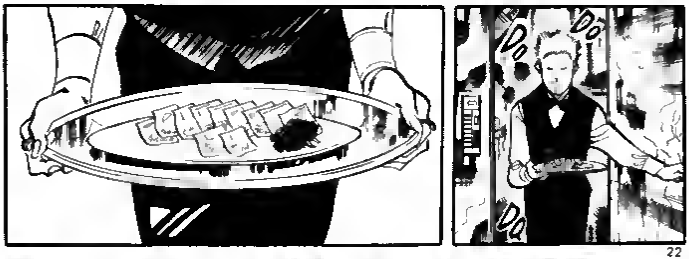
And I will be with you wherever you go, understand?

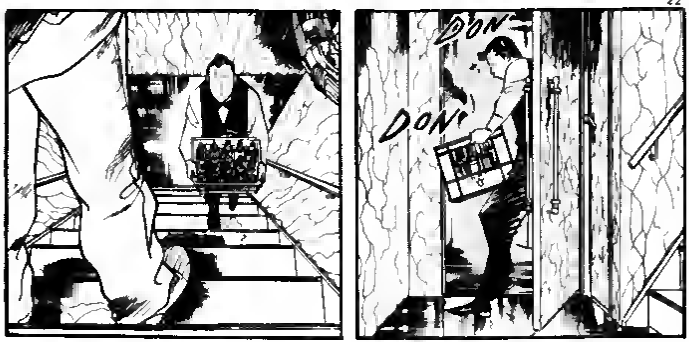
Yes.
You'll follow me no matter what?

CLUB
SAZAN
CLUB
SAZAN
DON
DON
TSUKU
TSUKU
CLUB
SAZAN
20
.....
DON
DON
DA
DA
DA
DA
Welcome, Miharu-san.

I'll go with that.
If you want to have him just disappear, we'll do it for you.
What should we do with this guy, Miharu-san?

It's with me now. What would you like to drink?
Miharu-san, I have something good today.


DO
DO
DO
22


DON
DON

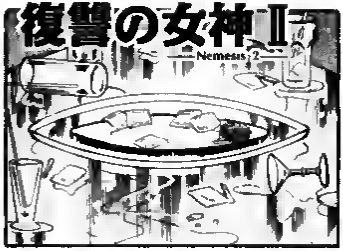
23
This isn't a place for the likes of you. Get out!
What are you looking at, old man.

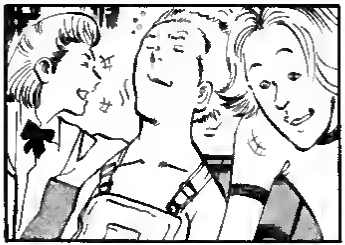
25

Defense.44

復讐の女神Ⅱ

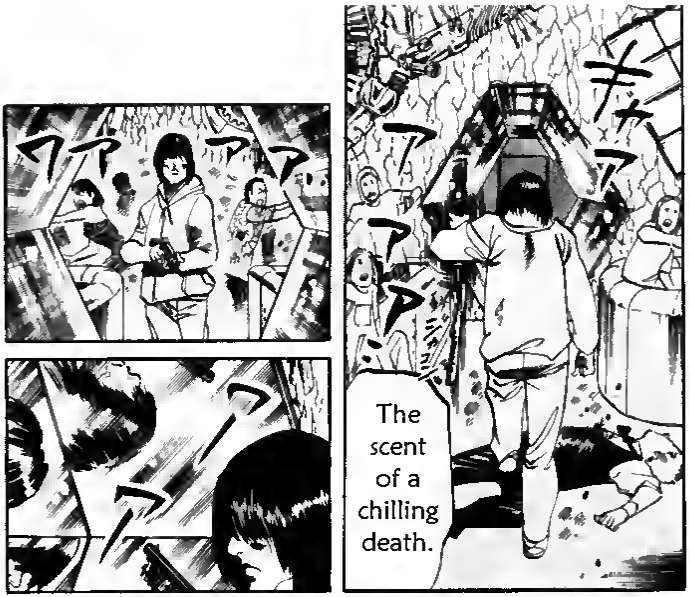
Nemesis 2

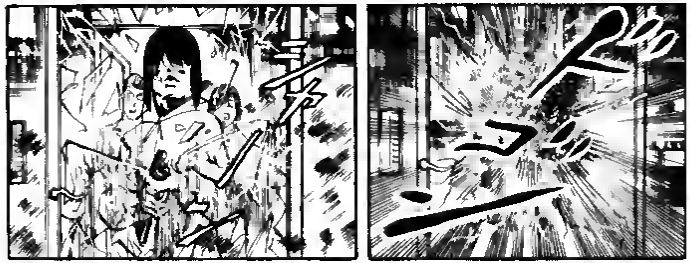




Defense.44
復讐の女神 Ⅱ
—Nemesis 2—

It's coming.
ゲゲッ
ハッ!
3
Here it comes.


The scent of a chilling death.



ガシャ
ゴ!!
5
ドルン

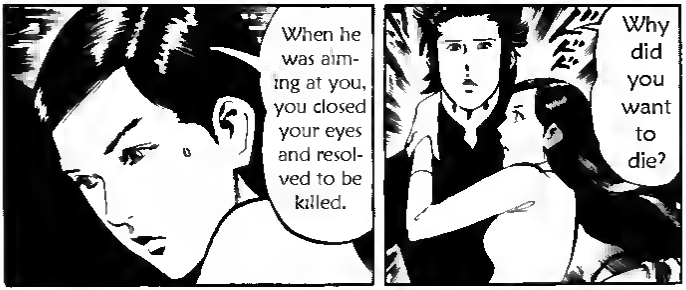
Qui-
ckly!
Run!
Keep
run-
ning!

Aegis
...
ヒソ
ダダダ
ワア!
ボイ
ミシ
ビキ
ダン

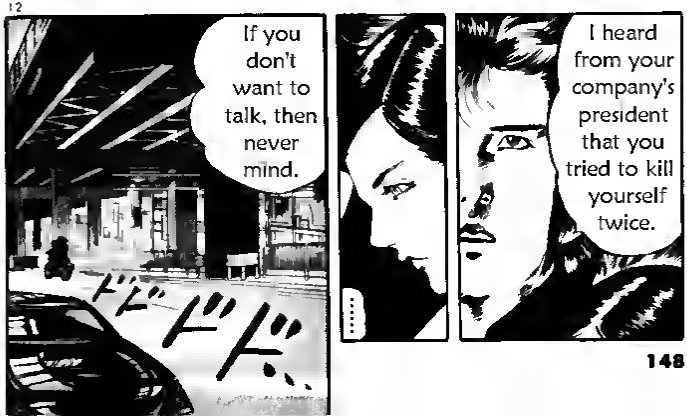
ドドド

ドド

Why did you save me ...
even after I...
ドドドドド...
I'm the "protector"; this is my job.
ドド


When he was aiming at you, you closed your eyes and resolved to be killed.
Why did you want to die?

12


If you don't want to talk, then never mind.
ドドドド...
I heard from your company's president that you tried to kill yourself twice.

13

There's tuna and avocado sandwiches. Have some if you're hungry.
Nice room.
Is this your home?
チカ
This is delicious.
Isn't that a home?
It's for resting and sleeping.
ﾁﾗｯ
It's not a home. It's just a place to stay.
Oh yeah, it's a starting point for you to go out somewhere.
And it's the place you wish to return to.
カチャ
What is a home?

It's a place where you feel comfortable, a place you want to come back to after work or hang out even if you'll be alone.
There can also be family members waiting for you.
You're eating, so that means you no longer want to die, right?
We're going out in the evening. You can take a shower if you want to.
Out? Where to?
Then this is not my home.
I haven't had a home for a long time.
There's something we have to do so that you can go home.

This is...?

Liu Yi-jian.
I am the head of the Liu Family...
Welcome, Tate Karito-sensei.
I have heard a lot about you.
Tate-san, what is this place?
Let's come inside and have some tea while we discuss the matter.
I know that Sun-sensei from Yokohama referred you here.
17
The house of the Liu Family. They're into international trading, and have gigantic networks and abundant capital all over the world.

How dare you ...!
Behind the mask, they are the largest underground organization in Asia, "Dragon Gate".
This is the organization that sent the hitman to kill you.

The only Chinese organization with such tattoos is Dragon Gate!
The hitman had the same tattoo on his palm.
Are you aware of the current situation?

You have entered the tiger's mouth.
20

Defense.45
復讐の女神Ⅲ
Nemesis 3

Be it the tiger's mouth ...
or a snake's pit...

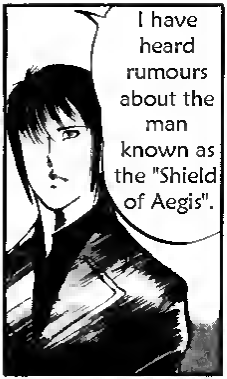
it is necessary to step in.

2

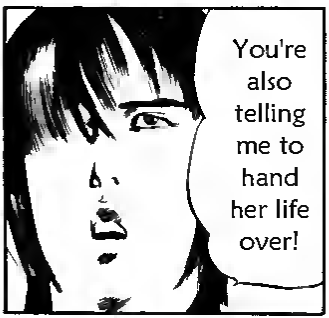
I know you're not actually Liu Yijian.

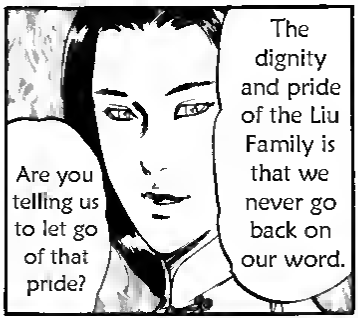
I'd like Dragon Gate to revoke the job to kill her!
I'm here to negotiate, and I would like to meet the real leader of the Liu Family.

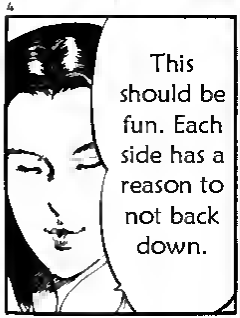
For the real leader, the dragon would have a crystal ball in its talons.
That's enough, Huang-ye.
3


I have heard rumours about the man known as the "Shield of Aegis".

I am Liu Yijian, head of the Liu Family and Dragon Gate.


You're also telling me to hand her life over!


Are you telling us to let go of that pride?
The dignity and pride of the Liu Family is that we never go back on our word.


This should be fun. Each side has a reason to not back down.

Leng! Leng Meng-xuan!
It seems the only way to settle this is a fight to the death.
……!
ザ
From last night……!
スタ
スタ、

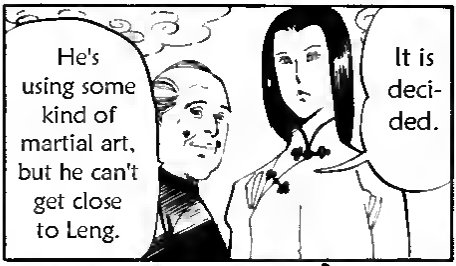
Each of you can use one weapon in a one-on-one duel. If you win, I'll comply with your request.
He lost face because you intervened with his job, and he wishes to clear the shame.
Why do you have to go this far?!
I hired you just to be my body-guard!
No ...!
You have one, right?
But I don't have a home to return to.

You can't take anything else.
Your artificial arm is a weapon in itself.
Wait!
ガ!

ミシミシ
ラ
ラ
ラ
ミシ

ギュ
ギ
ジャ
ジャ
オオ

Leng
Leng !!
Leng !!


He's using some kind of martial art, but he can't get close to Leng.
It is deci-ded.

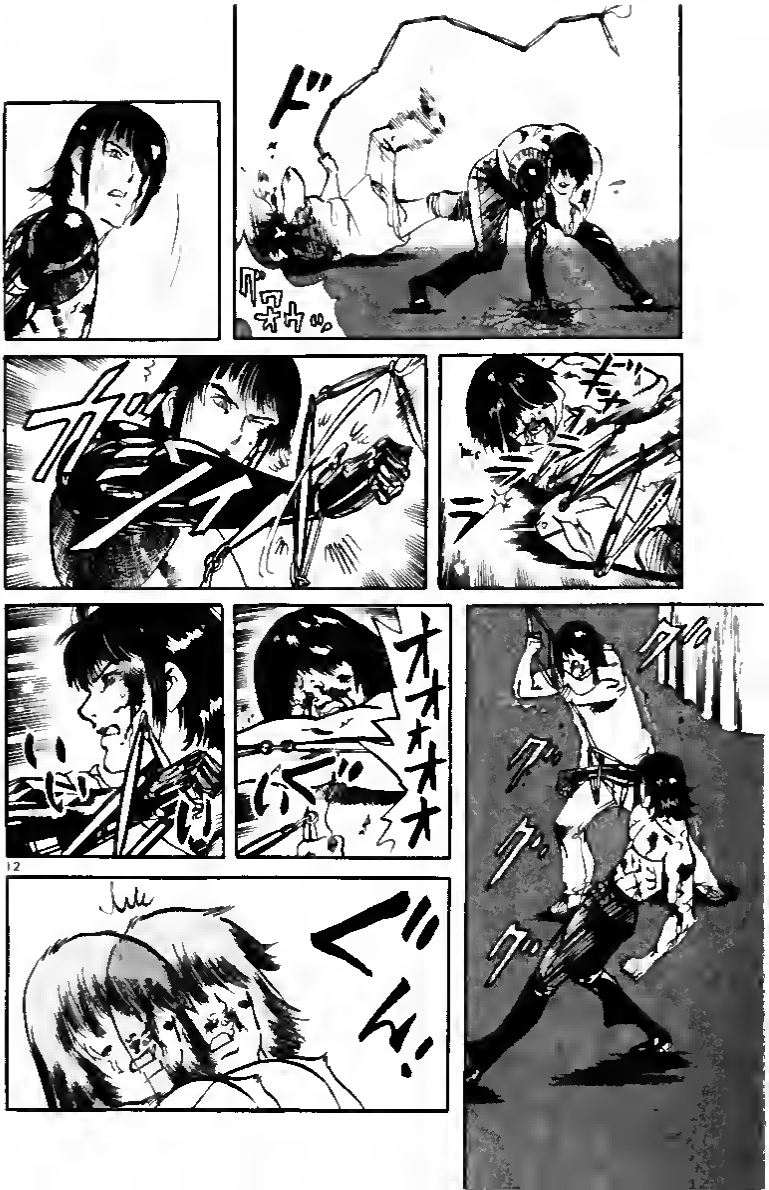
ヴィィ

ジャキ

A hid
den
wea
pon!

オオオオォ
ぐあ

That's enough ...!
オオ
オオ
No! No!
Stop ...!
ゴッ
ゎっ
ガ


ド
ドワオォッ
ナイフ
ギュ
ラ
ラ
オオオオ
いぐ
ぐん!
12

This is insane! He removed the artificial arm himself?!

Liu Yijian!
I win.

す！
I promise in the name of Liu Yijian.
I now revoke the job to kill Hisaishi Miharu.

Let's go home.

Ne-
me-
sis
...
The client "Nemesis" is not likely to back down from killing Miharu-san.
Don't forget ...
Dragon Gate was only hired.

I hope we won't be enemies then ...
Shield of Aegis.
If you are successful in protecting Miharu-san we may have the chance to meet again.
"Nemesis" the name of the fearful goddess of retribution and vengeance in Greek mythology.
Tate-san...

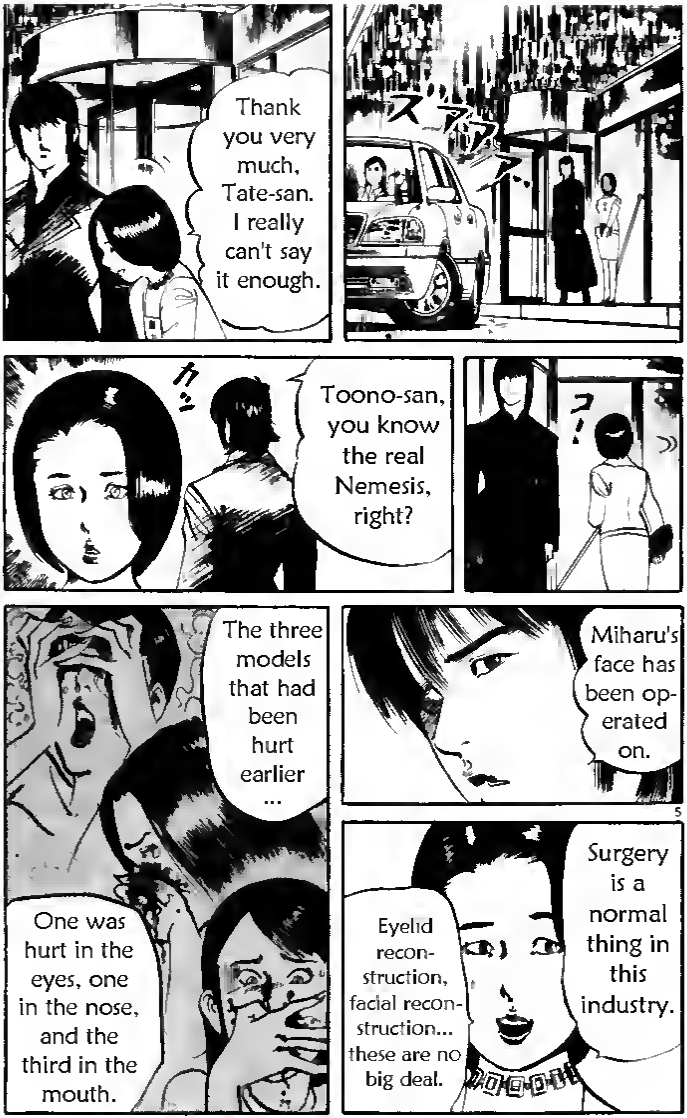
Mi-
ha-
ru?

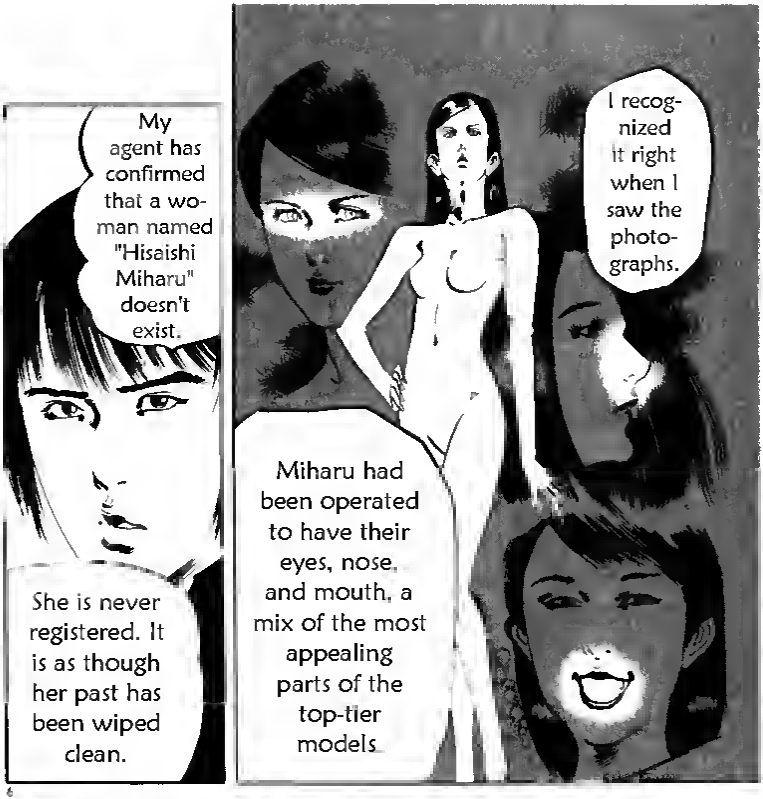
Defense.46
復讐の女神Ⅳ
——Nemesis 4——

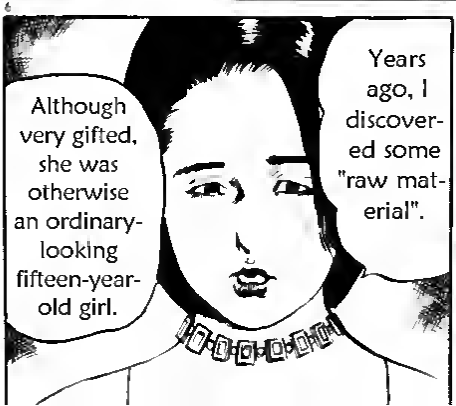
Why ?

……
スゥ…
……
3
フフ

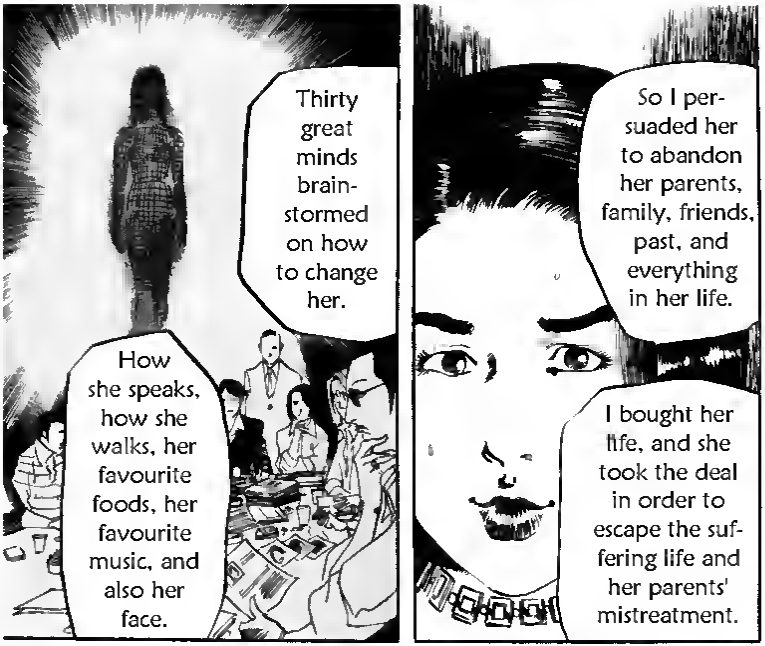
Miharu-chan, you're safe! I'm worried about you!
I'll go ahead then.
Toono-san, what about the job today?
Oh! Taking photos for the posters of Kosaido Company at Nithachi.


Thank you very much, Tate-san. I really can't say it enough.
スッ
Toono-san, you know the real Nemesis, right?
カッ
?
Miharu's face has been operated on.
5
The three models that had been hurt earlier ...
One was hurt in the eyes, one in the nose, and the third in the mouth.
Surgery is a normal thing in this industry.
Eyelid reconstruction, facial reconstruction... these are no big deal.

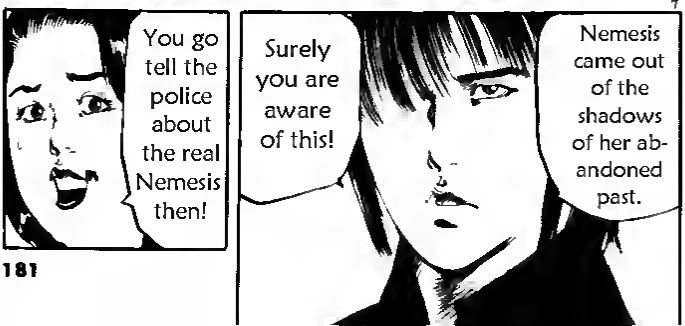

My agent has confirmed that a woman named "Hisaishi Miharu" doesn't exist.
She is never registered. It is as though her past has been wiped clean.
I recognized it right when I saw the photographs.
Miharu had been operated to have their eyes, nose, and mouth, a mix of the most appealing parts of the top-tier models.


Although very gifted, she was otherwise an ordinary-looking fifteen-year-old girl.
Years ago, I discovered some "raw material".

How should I say this...

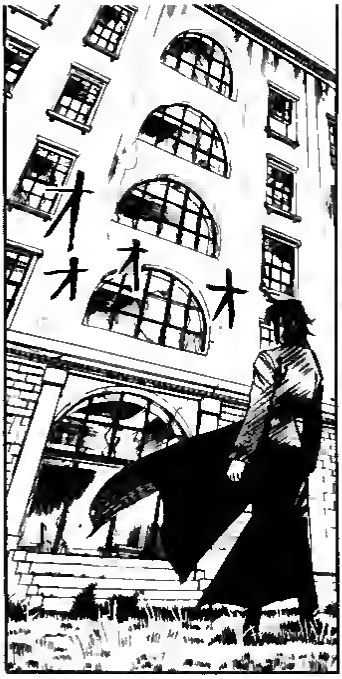

Thirty great minds brain-stormed on how to change her.
How she speaks, how she walks, her favourite foods, her favourite music, and also her face.
So I persuaded her to abandon her parents, family, friends, past, and everything in her life.
I bought her life, and she took the deal in order to escape the suffering life and her parents' mistreatment.

Miharu is the "Perfect Beauty" that I created!
Do you really believe that perfections can come up naturally? If it's not man-made, you will never get to see one.


You go tell the police about the real Nemesis then!
Surely you are aware of this!
Nemesis came out of the shadows of her abandoned past.

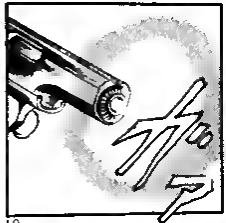
I'm not going to ask for reimbursement.
Tate-san, our deal is cancelled!
That's the safest way for Miharu.
Are you aware?
Nemesis is the name of the goddess of retribution and vengeance, that punishes human arrogance.
But if you cause us any loss...
I won't forgive you! This is for my Miharu!
Tate-san, wait!

The manager was shot and she was abducted!
Nemesis
The police just called! The car that Miharu rode in was attacked!
Please! Please help Miharu! My Miharu...!


オオオ

オオオオオ…

オ
オ
オオ


ガッ

オオオ
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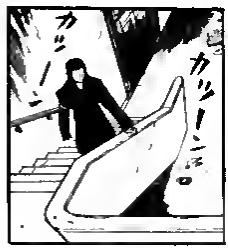
オオオオ

ドドドドド

ガアーン

ニーン

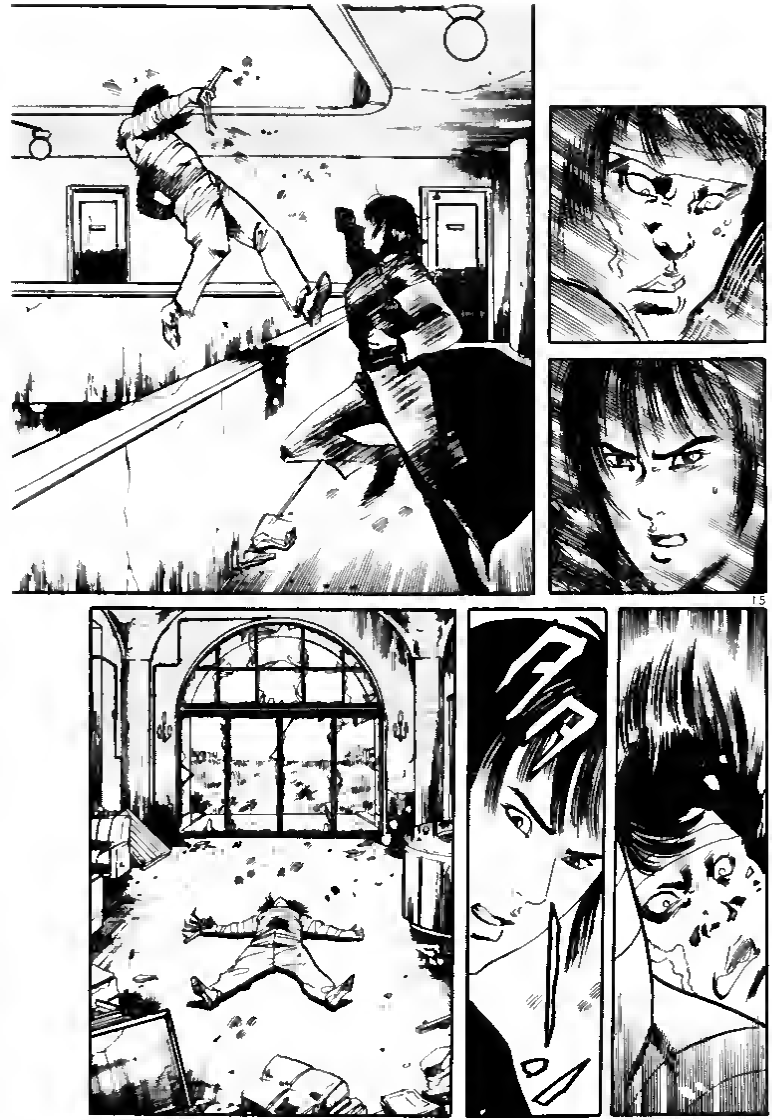

カッーン
カッーン

Nemesis! I'm here alone, as you requested.

Leng Meng-xuan ...!

I'm pretty sure Dragon Gate isn't aware of what you're doing here.
I was hired ...!
This has nothing to do with Liu Yijian.
This has nothing to do with Dragon Gate.
13
You're getting in my way.
Nemesis hired me!
ビキ
Die!

オオオオ
ガキ
!!



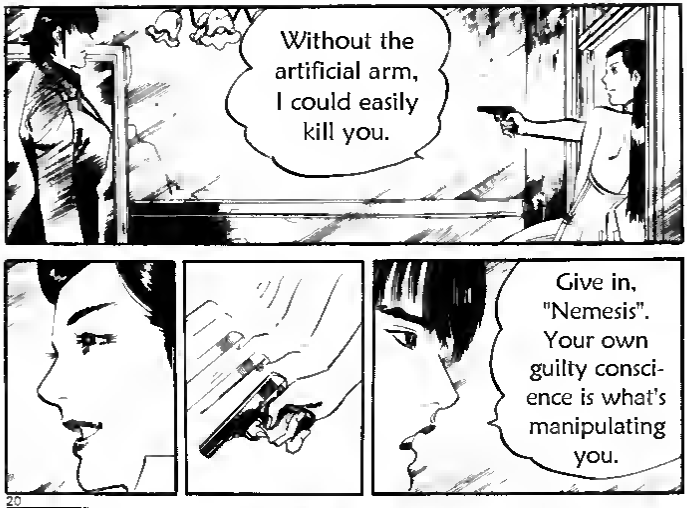
189

Aegis ...
but Nem-esis ...
is beau-tiful.
I'm ugly ...
You fool ...!

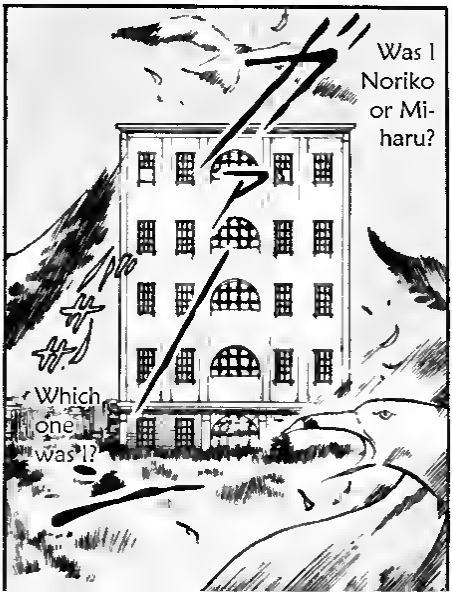
ガ
ガリーン
ガリーン
ゴト
カチ
Remove the artificial arm or I throw the woman out the window!
So you really are "Nemesis", just as I thought.

How long did you know?
Hisa-ishi Mi-haru ...
When Leng attacked the club, I saw your eyes. They were the eyes of some-one who realized her own guilt and resolved to be killed.
"Nomura Noriko", that's the real name that you abandoned.
You hired Dragon Gate to attack the three models your face was copied from, and also hired a hitman to kill your-self.
All because you detes-ted your alter ego, "Hisaishi Miharu"!

My father raped me, my mother tried to kill me. In order to run away from a past filled with "sadness", "agony", and "suffering", I had to change my face and my name to become someone else.
A poor girl who threw away everything in order to become someone else!
If you don't know Nomura Noriko, don't dare say that name!
Why? Because Miharu stole the "home" from Noriko.
But now... the Nomura Noriko that I once abandoned begins to condemn me.
19
チャ!
And you, the protector of Hisaishi Miharu, you deserve to die.


Without the artificial arm, I could easily kill you.
Give in, "Nemesis". Your own guilty conscience is what's manipulating you.
20
It's weird; every night I dream about Nomura Noriko's "home" that I ran away from. I dream about my kind parents when I was small.

If you slept with me last night...
would I change?


Was I Noriko or Miharu?
Which one was I?

Don't!

If you don't have a home to return to...
then make one!

But I believe there's an end to this darkness.
When I'm released from it, I'll reclaim my home; that's my belief!

My home was taken away from me.
That's why I am now on a dark and long road; the road of revenge.

There-fore, I can't sleep with you now.
I don't deserve to get a taste of some-thing like that!

■週刊ヤングサンデー平成13年35号から平成13年44号に掲載

One initial illustration for Kashihara Nanase that Fujiwara-sensei drew. At first, it was a "large breasts" plan, but...

Afterword

"Welcome to the 'Nest of Geese' Bar"

I'd like to introduce you to an odd place at the heart of Shinjuku. It's a small bar on the top of a skyscraper. Very few people know this place since it's located in a blind spot and is surrounded by other skyscrapers. The owner only owns some old jazz and chanson records for hobby. If you don't mind Scott Joplin and Dave Brubeck then you're lucky.

The bar opens from dusk till dawn. Just getting to sip your favourite drink while leering at the beautiful bartender with a sweet smile is already a pleasure in itself. But if you belong to the brighter day then you should not tread too close to this place, since it is the dark side of the city. This place is the biggest underworld info source in Japan. It's a trade post for illegal weapons and also a place to hire a hitman. Those who unintentionally make contact with it will be consumed by the darkness and can never return from it. But you don't have to be so scared; the man at the corner of the room would not bring out the hidden thing in his bag if it's not his job. More importantly, how about another glass of Chivas Regal?

Nanatsuki Kyouichi

Welcome to the bar "Nest of Geese". Some of you may notice that Nest of Geese was also in "Jesus", the last cooperative work of mine and Fujiwara Yoshihide-san's, and was an important stage of that story. Even though this story is a sequel to "Jesus", it does not take place immediately afterward. Therefore, the readers who do not know "Jesus" can ease up. Nest of Geese in this work also plays a different role. Once upon a time, the owner of the bar was an old man named Kashihara, but now the mysterious and beautiful Kashihara Nanase stands behind the counter. Their relationship will be revealed very soon in this work.

A friend of mine back in my school days inspired the idea of "Nest of Geese". He lived on the rooftop of a famous building in front of the Shinjuku Train Station. The first time I was there, I immediately had an impression that there was a world 30 meters above the ground that is devoid of the noise and crowdedness of the city on the ground below. Metaphorically, it is as if you're peeking down from the attic of a gigantic mansion that is a metropolis. When you were small, you must have had a dream of building your own secret base in the attic, right? After you have grown up, you probably have dreamt about a dark, comfortable place in some square space in the city, right? Nest of Geese is a "temporary nest" which allows the birds that can't stay in the same place for long to get a comfortable night's stay. Kashihara Nanase's smile will be for those who know the warmth of the dark.

2001年10月30日 BAR「雁の巣」のカウンターにて
http://www02.so-net.ne.jp/~july-m/

闇のイージス
AEGIS
IN THE
DARK